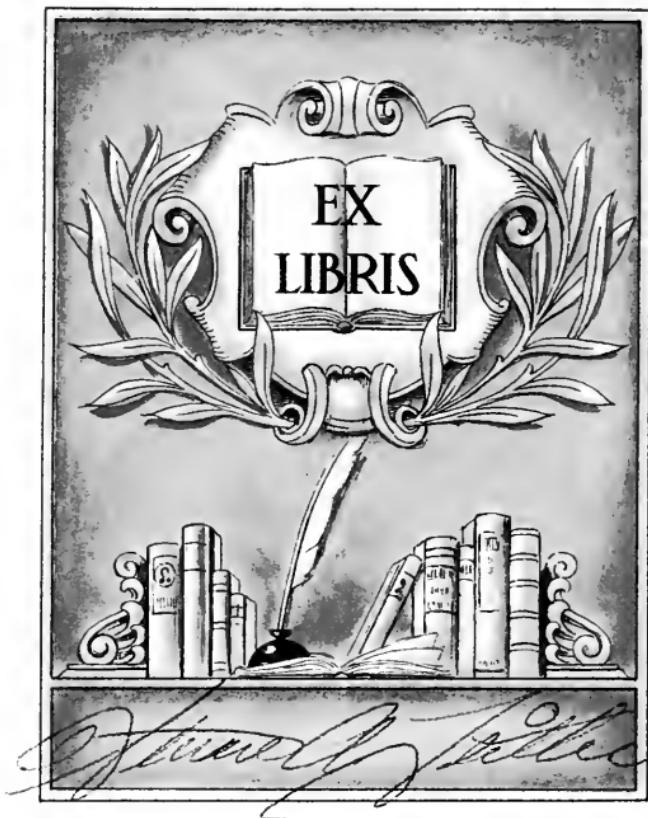


IN OUDEMON



Henry S. Drayton



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IN OUDEMON

REMINISCENCES OF AN
UNKNOWN PEOPLE BY AN
OCCASIONAL TRAVELER

EDITED BY

HENRY S. DRAYTON

AUTHOR OF "LIGHT IN DARK PLACES,"
"HUMAN MAGNETISM," ETC., ETC.



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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

AN urgent summons by messenger to the house of a venerable friend, Mr. Malcolm Browne, long retired from active business, but ever cognizant of and participant in the better interests of the community. Immediately responding to the call, I arrived at 213 Bower Place only to find myself too late; the aged heart had ceased to beat, yet over the calm features there lingered the genial, winning expression that all who were favored by his acquaintance loved to gaze upon. Tenderly and reverently we performed the last, sad rites, and on the following day Mrs. Browne handed me a large packet, carefully wrapped and sealed.

“Ah, the manuscript he used to speak about?”

“Yes,” replied the old lady, most fitting companion to our dear departed friend; “you will keep it safely until I too have gone beyond——”

The lovely woman has left us. Surely it must be that she has rejoined the husband she lamented so deeply. Now I would perform the trust undertaken at my friend’s request, the publication of the

manuscript committed to my charge. We knew that in his earlier life he had been something of a traveler, and had visited regions quite apart from the routes taken by the occasional tourist, for often would he entertain guests with recitals of experience and observation concerning countries and peoples of which we knew little, albeit of the land and people that form the subject of the following narrative he had been silent. Whether or not it would have been wiser to continue that silence I must leave to your good judgment, my reader. If I have erred in this matter kindly attribute it to an earnest sense of duty as the literary executor of a much beloved friend, and to the feeling that what he had learned among the inhabitants of that "undiscovered country" might be of interest and profitable in both the material and moral sense to some of his fellow countrymen.

THE EDITOR.

IN OUDEMON.

CHAPTER I.

MY CHANCE ACQUAINTANCE.

A ROUND of duties had brought my hours as Secretary to the well-known Corporation of Personal Liabilities (Limited) to their close for the day, and after making up a summary for the Superintendent I departed, taking the course that led into the park that spread its cooling shades within half a mile of our building. There a vacant seat under the close branches of an old wax maple invited a moment's repose. A fair afternoon in early June, there were in that well-kept area of leaf and flower many loungers whose dress and manner offered a constantly varying pantomime. Despite my metropolitan training the "passing show" of human nature wherever it might be met was interesting, and in this familiar environment

it had attractions for my inquisitive senses. They came and went in endless chain, man, woman, youth and child, each with his expression of temperament, race and individuality, while leaning back in easy pose and semi-drowse, or like a Scotch terrier with one eye asleep and the other awake, I passively took note of what appeared peculiar or novel. Perhaps I had been thus occupied, or unoccupied, as you, good reader, may designate my condition, for ten minutes when there approached, walking leisurely enough in the train of passers, a man whose face aroused so much of my attention that I sat upright that I might the better see and study him. He passed on apparently in a brown study, and I, for a cause that I could not well explain, arose from my seat and followed him, keeping some eight or ten paces behind. He led me thus on the main promenade of the park a hundred yards or so, then struck into a side path. Mingling with the few who pursued the same course I continued to follow the stranger. A short distance from the main thoroughfare this side path or alley expanded into a circular space of fifty feet diameter, at the center of which splashed a small fountain in its granite basin, on whose circumference were set a half dozen benches. At this circle my unknown leader stopped and took possession of an unoccupied bench. Glancing around I saw a vacant seat nearly opposite and made my way to it. No sooner was the stranger fairly seated than

he took out a leather-bound book and commenced writing in it. His apparent absorption in this gave me opportunity to observe him at my ease. He seemed about fifty years old, as men average; was tall, large of limb and well proportioned in body. A head of good size, with hair moderately long and brown in color was covered with a cap of dark gray cloth; the vizor well projecting to shade the eyes, but now pushed back, revealed enough of forehead to show that it was full and high. A beard, slightly gray at the sides, neatly trimmed, somewhat pointed *a la* Van Dyke, imparted dignity to the face. The eyes were large and from the distance of my seat, looked mildly and reflectively out from their recesses under the thick overhanging brows.

There was that in the bearing of the man that intimated serenity and poise of an unusual order, and as he continued his pencillings in the notebook my study became more absorbing; indeed, I found myself soon laboring hard to devise a plan or pretext for accosting him. An incident helped me in this direction very unexpectedly. A troop of boys suddenly broke into our quiet retreat. They were accompanied by a fine St. Bernard dog, evidently young, and so full of mischievous pranks that he was the chief object of their gamesome excitement. It was "Here, Rupert!" "Here, Rupert!" "Good dog!" shouted by one and another in great glee, and Rupert gamboled from one to the other, jump-

ing upon and almost overwhelming the recipients of his attention. The boys made the fountain circle the theatre of their sport and ran around and around, the dog pursuing and rollicking with them. The unknown paid little attention to the mêlée at first; then closing his notebook, he laid it on the bench beside him and looked with an amused face upon the merry scene. This, however, for a few minutes only, for in one of his rounds the St. Bernard stopped and turned toward the stranger and, slowly walking to him, put a huge paw upon his knee, and looked up into his face, as if soliciting notice. The man patted him upon the head, the dog wagging his tail as if greatly pleased. Then, as if a sudden humor had seized him, the cunning brute snatched the notebook and dashed off with it, running perhaps forty feet and then turning around as if to see the effect of this last prank. The man rose from his seat, but did not follow or say a word. The boys, however, who, for the most part, had been watching the dog's conduct with the stranger, now ran for the rogue, crying out, "Drop it, Rupert; drop it, drop it." But Rupert was bent on having his fun, and had no disposition to drop the prize just then. He would permit two or three of them to come almost within catching distance, and then jump away, carrying the book securely between his solid white teeth. Around the fountain the boys drove him. In making a circuit the dog took a direction toward my bench, and, watching my op-

portunity as he passed, I tapped his nose smartly with the palm of my hand. The notebook dropped upon the concrete, and almost before the dog knew he had lost it I had picked it up and was back in my seat. "Thank you, mister," cried the boy who was the dog's master, and with a "Beg your pardon, sir," he called Rupert, and the whole party ran down the walk out of view.

The stranger walked over to my side of the fountain, his face wearing a smile inexpressibly winning. I rose to meet him and, extending my hand with the notebook, said, "I am glad to restore this to you."

"Obliged to you, young friend; it was neatly done. Sometimes a dog will resent an interference in his play."

"Oh, I had no fear; dogs of that breed are usually good natured."

"Yes, it appears so, sir; but I am not familiar with dogs—scarcely know one kind from another."

"Indeed, sir, that is strange. You certainly appear a man of much experience."

"You are kind in opinion, but let me sit by you. In our country there are no dogs."

"What, my good sir! a country without dogs!"

"We have no use for them, so do not keep them."

"What kind of people may yours be?" was my more than surprised inquiry.

He smiled in that winning way, but did not answer.

"Well," I went on, "we have many kinds of dogs among us; not a few of them running about on two feet, and even less useful essentially than the genuine canine. Excuse my curiosity—you are a stranger in the city?"

"Not long since arrived, as you have perceived, and cannot own to knowing anyone as a friend in all your population?"

"Can I be of any use to you?" burst from my lips, perhaps too eagerly, for my new acquaintance smiled again with a certain twinkle of his deep-set eyes that suggested a humorous vein. He replied, slowly:

"Perhaps, young sir, you can be; just now I have little need of help, however. Later, if it does not prove inconvenient, I may ask some kindly office."

"I am not so deep in business, sir, that I cannot do a gentleman a little service. You will find others, many, in our city, who will readily meet any wish that you may express."

"Thank you for the assurance. But may I ask the name of my new-found friend?"

I handed him one of my business cards. He examined it for a moment, and said, "Malcolm Browne." 'Tis a right honest-sounding name. Of Scottish origin—a sturdy, sensible race. I will give you my name." He took out a pencil, and, detaching a leaf from the notebook wrote upon it and handed it to me. "My name and present address. Should you find an hour's leisure to-morrow even-

ing after 7—your time—I shall be rarely pleased to have you call at my room.” Rising as he said this, he bade me “A happy meeting, friend,” and departed.

Glancing at the bit of paper, I read, ARCHBOLD RESTLING, of Oudemon, 78 Church Terrace.

DEEPLY IMPRESSED.

Of course I arranged my affairs so that the visit at the rooms of the stranger could be made. The short colloquy had but deepened my interest in him; even the name and address had peculiarities, to me at least, for reinforcing curiosity. I had never before met with the name of Restling, and as for Oudemon, surely there was nothing in the gazetteers of this country or England that furnished a line of satisfactory information concerning such a town or country. It must be owned that the word Oudemon proved a cause of some irritation to my inquisitive spirit, and the result of such examination as I could make regarding the whereabouts of a place so designated, of importance adequate to that I considered worthy of mention on the newcomer’s card, was practically nothing. Inferentially, from the silence of their records, Oudemon was a town, village or resident site so insignificant that the statisticians did not esteem it worthy their notice. Howbeit, that this man, of bearing and qualities that would give him preferment anywhere, should design-

nate the place of his residence in this formal style could not but intimate on any rational grounds that this Oudemon had good claim to consideration, as one among human settlements. That the gazetteers of commerce and politics had slighted it might be attributed to those possibilities of mistake and error that are associated by scientific men with the workings of the human mind in all departments of activity.

Mr. Restling affected me in ways that differed much from the impressions obtained from others. His dress and mien had peculiarities. Not that there was anything in them to offend a delicate taste, but there were variations from the form and vogue affected by men of good social standing that struck the deliberate observer. His clothing was becoming, fitted well, and there was a sort of naturalness and ease in the fit not seen usually among those of townsmen who were considered good dressers. A neat collar, open at the button, of low cut and of a pink-white fabric, evidently undyed, offered no restraint to head movement; a scarf of fine, glossy texture, of an olive tone, with a delicate tracery of leaves and buds in orange, was folded neatly about the collar and tied in a loose knot with short ends. His coat was of a pattern approaching an army officer's blouse, of a soft gray, and buttoned well up in front. Trousers and cap were of the same fine material, but darker in tone; and the shoes he wore were of gray canvas or some such

cloth, easy in breadth and secured to the feet by small buckles or snap-catches of bronze-colored metal.

His voice was gentle and winning, clear in articulation, without the nervous emphasis common to men of like temperament in our city, and his language, well chosen and definite, had in its expression the characteristics of a well-educated and experienced man; yet no one, I am sure, could listen to him for two minutes without conceiving the idea that Mr. Restling was of a type and class of people rarely met. While his English was unexceptionable, a singular accent or *timbre* prevailed in it that piqued curiosity. One might have given him a birthplace in Massachusetts, a school life say in Baltimore, and later a career that imposed periods of residence in several foreign countries; but as for the country and people of his allegiance your much-traveled man would be at a loss to name it with any confidence. He, however, appeared quite at ease in strange surroundings, his conduct being always simple and unaffected; yet you were conscious of a reserved dignity that won upon your attention and respect, inviting your confidence—never repellent.

Church Terrace, by the way, is a little side street in a suburban quarter, most appropriate for the residence of those who affect retirement quite apart from the fast-pulsing movements of either social or commercial life. A very quiet, self-contained neighborhood, people who live there, I suspect, are

much like the burghers of Bruck, jealously suspicious of most strangers who invade their retreat. This thought at any rate was suggested by the inquiring look of the little German maid who answered my pull upon the small white knob.

“Does Mr. Restling live here?”

“Yes,” was the answer; “you know him?”

“Yes.” I produced the slip on which he had written.

The girl looked at it sharply and said:

“Oh, you der man Mister Res’ling like to see?”

“Yes.”

“Vel den, come in; upstairs you find him in der room front by der hall.”

“Thank you.” Up the stairs I climbed and, turning frontward, had no difficulty in striking the right room, for on the door was pinned a slip, evidently from the same source as the one I held, with simply “Restling” upon it, in bold letters. Scarcely had my fingers ceased their light tap when the door was opened by my new acquaintance himself.

“Come in, come in. You are welcome. Give me your hat; there’s a chair.”

I settled comfortably into the indicated piece of furniture, responded warmly to his salutation, and glanced about me. It was a cheerful room and neatly furnished, the gas jets softened by pearl shadelets throwing a pleasant radiance upon the equipment and making the occupant in his *negligé* coat and slippers appear more interesting than ever.

He had been reading. There were books and pamphlets upon a side table, some of them open. The notebook that had been the means of our introduction to each other lay with them. He interpreted my glance at the table and said:

“Yes, I am usually employed one way or another. Then one picks up an item occasionally that may be of use, you know. I am fond of gleaning.”

“Your notebook wasn’t injured by the dog’s teeth?”

“No, not at all; look at it, if you care to,” he said handing the article to me. I examined the binding and turned over the leaves for a minute, then returned it to the owner.

“No, I can’t see that the slightest harm was done it. But it is an exceedingly well made book for the purpose—very strong, yet so light and flexible; the paper seems to be of a peculiar sort. I am not familiar with it.”

“Perhaps not up here—the fibre is obtained from a low plant, something like your meadow rush in appearance. As for the quality of the binding, that is the way everything is done in Oudemon.”

“Tis a comfort, sir,” I rejoined, “to live in a community—it must be, indeed—where you can trust your neighbor to do just what you would expect of him.”

“With you, I suppose”—there was a trace of sarcasm in the voice—“*intentions* go far toward making life acceptable, and you generously make amends

for and put up with a deal of inconvenience and neglect; and possibly think it a virtue in you. With us it is quite different, I assure you. Intentions and promises are carried into effect as a matter of course. What one of us expects, he gets, and no one would think of doing otherwise."

"My dear sir, you increase my curiosity, already overmuch excited. Will you tell me where this town or country of Oudemon is?"

He smiled and drew his chair—one not unlike those used on ocean steamers by voyageurs who appreciate comfort—closer to mine. "So, you would like to know where Oudemon is?"

"Most certainly, a place with such a satisfactory class of people ought to be known and read of all civilization. If things be as you have intimated among the Oudemonians they can give points on matters of the highest importance to us and others who boast an advanced enlightenment. Why, your countrymen are the salt of the earth, or ought to be, but packed in some obscure recess of the universe, as they seem to be, their seasoning has little effect upon their degenerate fellow mortals."

He smiled at my attempt to be facetious, and rejoined: "I do not know regarding their saline properties, but as for their correspondence with the world outside their own territory, it is extremely limited. It is doubtful whether you would find any record of our people on the books of one of your great commercial houses; and probably none

of your keen-sighted economists has ever caught a glimpse of our commonwealth, however much he may have traveled. I have read in many of their books, but never espied a line that suggested a jot of information concerning the way Oudemon folk live, and what of moral or civil superiority they possess over the European and North American systems of government and social usage."

"You deal in surprises, it seems to me, altogether," I exclaimed. "And is Oudemon only a fiction after all?"

"My young friend, assume that it is a solid reality," was somewhat emphatically replied, "and somewhere in the southern continent of America, claiming a definite location."

"South America!"

"Yes; not many degrees of longitude from Rio Janeiro, westward, and within a thousand miles of the Pacific coast by air line."

"Is it an old city or community?"

"It boasts no ancient monuments besides the remains, interesting enough certainly, of a race long extinct. Thither a century or more ago an enthusiast with a scheme of colonization led a party of four hundred converts. A settlement was established, to which other converts came until a thousand or more souls were numbered. Thirty-five years later—but this in confidence"—he spoke gravely; I bowed in wide-eyed sincerity, my hands nervously clasping a knee, as if I were listening to

a prophet of the old Syrian time—"I feel that you will be true; not that there is any fear of exposure—but I would not have you subjected to the sneers and ridicule of skeptics. As I was about to say, thirty-five years, nearly, after the colony had been started, and it had grown wonderfully in that time, a terrible cataclysm occurred on the western frontier of our territory—a great mountain upheaval, resulting in the complete closing up of the only route or trail to our settlement. This was ascertained by subsequent explorations undertaken by Oudemon engineers. A great, rocky ridge now occupies the site of the former mountain slopes, with precipitous sides thousands of feet in height; so steep and sharp, indeed, that not even a chamios could scale them."

"But you, sir, are here," I murmured, scarcely above my breath.

"Yes, and others of our people might be here, too, if they chose; for while the geology of our border is so forbidding to the outside world, it offers no hindrance to us, if it be desirable to visit the outside world."

"You certainly enjoy privileges, then, that are unknown to us, good sir. But pardon me, if I inquire more of your national affairs. I am not an official here, but have been long interested in matters of civil policy—on the side of reform measures."

He smiled at this and rejoined: "I cannot give you many points of use in your study, because—

so far as our home relations go—we do not pursue a course at all like yours——”

My expression of uncertainty as to his meaning was readily caught, for he added: “We have no government in the sense which is common with you.”

“No government? Then how do you administer public affairs?”

“Everything of public interest and public benefit is a matter of common concern with us all, old and young,” he answered quietly.

“So it ought to be,” I emphasized; “yet with us it is a matter of party or faction appropriation or control. But how do you manage about the expenditures, or cost of public improvements, and things of general utility—who pays the expenses? Surely, you cannot get along without a Board of Finance!”

His eyes twinkled with amusement. “We get along very comfortably without such an institution. In fact, we have no official class, and no system of taxation for their maintenance.”

“Pray, my dear Mr. Restling, enlighten me a little on this subject; although something of an idealist regarding the possibilities of human nature, your declaration amazes me.”

“Willingly, my young friend. We have, indeed, a company—or board, if you please—of our older men and women, whom we call councillors; not appointed or elected, but rather generally recognized as worthy of respect because of their experience and

matured judgment—natural ministers and guides in affairs affecting the general welfare of our community.”

“I think I understand you, sir. We have in our smaller communities, villages or boroughs, bodies of men who hold office without pay; and they represent the best class of the residents. It is certainly true that public affairs in those places are more faithfully and satisfactorily administered than in most of the towns that have boards of well-paid men to give all their time to public duty. When I was a boy we lived in a town then quite small—say 7,500 people; it has now over 100,000. My father was one of the ‘Town Committee,’ and although a very enterprising business man, occupied from seven in the morning until eight at night in his store, he gave one evening a week to town affairs, and was content with the honor attached to the position. He took pleasure in speaking of the simple method then adopted for ‘running’ the town, and the economy practiced in expenditure; often contrasting them with the policy of later days, when there had grown up a large and complex system of municipal government, with a great array of high-salaried functionaries. There was party opposition in that early time, but no ‘boss rule’—which you may not need to have explained”—Restling laughed quietly and nodded for me to continue—“and no partisan jobbery. To be sure, there were no great spoils of office then to stimulate the greed and ani-

mosities of men, and no chiseling of bids and contract frauds as now. A few men transacted all the business deemed necessary, without thought of pay or commissions, and that without the aid of deputies, secretaries and supernumeraries, such as now apparently exist only to make drafts upon the public treasury and to increase the burden of taxation and vexation upon the industrious and thrifty few. In our city here, we are not worse off than the citizens of other places, but political movements are to us of private station a series of almost constant surprises. We never can tell what the party in power will do next, although quite sure that its leaders will do their best to keep possession of the places of authority and emolument by any and all means, however corrupt and unscrupulous."

"It seems strange, especially to me," the stranger rejoined in a vein of reflection, "that civilized communities hold so tenaciously to old methods affecting their general and domestic life in spite of knowledge, especially as those old methods have been demonstrated unworthy of an intelligence such as modern people claim. Your large towns and cities, friend Malcolm"—I could not help a look of gratitude for this familiar address—"with their disparities of birth, education and circumstances of living among the people, are unhappy aggregations. We believe that such centralization of population in itself is a cause of much of the evil from which you suffer. In a smaller community high moral principle

has a chance of recognition. There may be few good men in it, but they become known and their influence is felt. In the large city, with its mass of people variant in type and race and sympathy, dependent for the wages of subsistence upon daily labor, which may be offered or withheld almost at the pleasure of a privileged, money-arrogant class, the moral temperature is low; honor, truth and duty are not the ruling virtues commanding general respect; indeed, the very struggle for the necessities of life in which the masses are engaged renders their sense of moral integrity dull. Centralization of population and of power is not an economical advantage to men, and does not promote their best interests—the welfare of body and soul. Does not all history from ancient time till now prove it?"

"You have no city or metropolitan center, then, my dear sir?"

"No; only our district sections for social convenience and mutual coöperation. But now, my young friend, that clock"—which was then striking nine—"warns me—may I send you away? I have certain things to do before seeking yonder bed, and our time for 'turning in,' as you sailors say, is between nine and ten of your hours. If you please, and it is no interference with your engagements, let us meet at five of the evening to-morrow at that little fountain where the roguish dog made us acquainted."

Rising from the chair as he concluded, he offered a hand which I seized without a word.

“Good-by; I shall be there,” he added, opening the door into the passage.

“Good-by, sir,” I responded. “I shall be there, too, you may be sure.”

On my way to my lodgings I was quite lost in meditation on the singular character of this interview. Thoughts of uncertainty, doubt, mistrust and wonder mingled in the current. What did it mean? Who was this man? Could there be any such country as Oudemon? What sort of a story was that of its being cut off from the world by a great upheaval of nature? Was I dreaming? Was I the dupe of a smart knave, or under the spell of a paranoiac as the doctors have it, with “a systematized delusion.” Certainly there was nothing sinister in the appearance or language of the man; indeed, all his manner was penetrated by a frank simplicity. A knave would not have attempted to gain my trust by retailing a story whose patent improbability would be likely to awaken suspicion.

Whatever he might be I determined to see more of him, and, if possible, elicit something of his purpose, if he had a purpose in sojourning among us.

AT THE FOUNTAIN AGAIN.

At five of the next day I was seen turning into the alley that led to the fountain circle, and making

my way to the bench where the stranger had tarried on the (to me) memorable occasion of our first meeting. I found it unoccupied, and had scarcely sat down when the voice of Restling hailed me:

“I was right behind you, my friend, as you walked here. Don’t you ever have impressions?”

Looking up quickly I replied:

“I wasn’t aware of your nearness, it must be confessed, Mr. Restling. I know people who pretend to certain sensations or anticipations regarding the approach of others. Do you have ‘impressions,’ as you call them?”

He seated himself by my side, and in his pleasant manner said:

“Yes, it is a common experience with certain of us at home to have impressions. You could not very well go to visit one of them without giving him an intimation of your coming; that is, he would receive a thought or idea clearly enough to inform him that some one—he might sense the real person—would be at his house within a certain time; and so he would be ready to meet you. Very convenient, eh?”

“I must own very convenient. Of course, I am not quite ignorant of this sort of thing, but most instances are to be placed to the account of coincidence; is it not so?”

“If you, Malcolm, of the good Browne stock, lived with us of Oudemon a few months you would place them to the account of mental development or

psychic acuteness. Now in the way of communication at a distance you probably think your improved telegraphic methods a very remarkable instrumentality, but in our country we have people who can talk with each other although separated by miles of distance, and need no elaborate apparatus of batteries, magnets, diaphragms, wires, etc., to assist them."

"Strange visitant from another sphere as you appear to be," I rejoined, "my wonder has been expanding from the first moment you were seen in this vicinity; and now my astonishment can only ask, in all humility, how is this done?"

He laughed audibly, and gently clapped a hand upon my shoulder.

"Well, young sir, our people have learned certain facts regarding the constitution of the air and the forces of nature, and made them useful in our everyday life. We have found, through experiment and study, that there are points of contact or assimilation between the human mind and these forces, and by a nice adjustment of motive, will, effort, ideas and feelings may be projected beyond self and transported to certain places as may be desired."

"How very convenient! What a triumph of mind over nature!" I burst out. "And that an isolated people should accomplish it! How I should like to visit them! Are foreigners permitted to enter your territory, sir?"

“Yes, if they can get in?”

“Oh, I recall what you told me last evening, of that great cosmic change on your western frontier.”

“On certain conditions a stranger might enter Oudemon. So little is known of us, however, that there is on record but one or two outsiders who have shown inclination to enter our domain, and they, we believe, were adventurous persons who found the peculiar geology of our border a subject of interest. I doubt that they even imagined that a community of industrious and comfortable people lived beyond those frowning ridges. It is common enough for mining prospectors to come up from the Pacific and survey the neighboring region, because at some points along the river there are known to be deposits of silver and gold, and legends are common to the effect that hundreds or thousands of years ago gold, silver, copper, tin and precious stones, as they are called, were mined in great quantities by the ancient race or races that inhabited the hills and upper plains. We have old mines that were worked ages back, and still supply in ample measure metals highly esteemed by your civilization.”

“And your people, of a different and better civilization,” I rejoined, with some irony that could scarcely be suppressed, “don’t care for the so-called ‘precious metals,’ the substantial basis of business operations and commercial credit the world over; they have no necessities, I infer, that gold and silver

would subserve. Fortunate, happy folks the Oudemonians must be; and I am impelled to repeat that I should, indeed, like to visit them, and learn, if my poor intelligence were adequate to the task, such lessons as would be invaluable to me and my kind. Perhaps I could then be an humble means of doing some real good for this great outer world of mine."

Restling's calm eyes looked into mine as I spoke, and the half smile that poised upon his lips exhibited his amusement at my warmth, and his understanding of my meaning. A pause ensued, each looking steadily at the other. He broke silence.

"My young friend, you are evidently sincere. The way may be found for your entrance into our country. But there will be need of patience on your part and effort that will declare itself. Pardon me, if I do not enter into details; they will be offered for your consideration later. Once in our country you will not find yourself in very strange company, although you may see and hear things that will contrast strikingly with the methods and opinions that obtain there."

"If the way can be opened for my visit I am certainly in the mood, Mr. Restling, to attempt it. Being a bachelor, and having no compulsory responsibilities just at present to meet, I can leave the city within a month for north or south; and my interest in human nature is such that any opportunity to study life in peculiar or novel states has a very strong attraction for me."

"Now, this is well, Malcolm," returned he. "This morning I received an impression that signifies an early departure for the South, possibly to-morrow, if further advised. Will you, at any rate, go up to Church Terrace to-morrow evening?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then I will say good-by to you. In our country we leave each other with 'A happy meeting soon.' "

I was surprised by this announcement—so soon parted! He saw in my face the shade of disappointment and said:

"You are surprised?"

"Yes, and more, very sorry," I answered, "for I have been nursing the thought that for some time I should enjoy opportunities of meeting and talking with you. Many suggestions have occurred to me that I should be glad to have your views upon. Will you return to the city?"

"If I go southward probably not, especially if I return to Oudemon, which is not my immediate purpose. But you may visit us; and then we should have frequent talks, and I or others wiser might discuss your queries and suggestions. There"—suddenly pausing as if something had arrested his attention, he remained quiet and abstracted for at least three minutes, then resumed—"a communication that calls me again."

Pressing my hand warmly he rose and walked away with long strides.

I gazed at the man until he had disappeared from

view. A wonder, indeed, he had become to me. A traveler from some distant star, the dark companion of Sirius, for instance, could not have absorbed or fascinated me more. Nothing unnatural or unearthly about him, for all that—no, man like myself, yet exhibiting elements markedly uncommon, at least in their expression; a man developed in certain degrees of faculty and spirit beyond the experience of the people among whom I mingled daily. It was not his knowledge of the world, its history, science, politics, that compelled my respect, for he did not affect great learning or pretend to eminent ability—no, it was rather the evidences of higher or deeper manhood, of the essentials of a broader humanity than appeared in my neighbors and friends. He was simple in statement, as appears in the conversation I have reported, and this plainly enough was his common manner. But there was a serenity of expression, a cast of feature most unusual, a habit of pose and movement that could not be otherwise than striking to any one who observed him for a little time. I could not conceive a recluse of the Caucasus, or a mystic of the Altai, in whom the evidences of self-mastery and breadth of soul were more decided and impressive. While near him his influence seemed of a nature so unlike that of my everyday associates that it imparted a buoyancy of feeling and faculty that was most agreeable. My manhood seemed to expand in the light of his quiet, kindly eyes. Often I exclaimed in

thought: "Happy Oudemont, if there are many like this man among thy people!"

SO SOON DEPARTED.

"A fool at forty is a fool indeed," says a time-tried adage.

I was a little past thirty-six then, and had seen something of the world, and, without egotism, regarded myself much removed from the imputation of folly. True, I had not climbed many rungs of the ladder of success, as my fellows, for the most part, regard success, but had sought in my leisure to acquire information concerning matters apart from the business calling that I had pursued since the attainment of my majority. I had studied languages and music; I had traveled in foreign lands for business and mental profit; and, as opportunity might offer, attended meetings and congresses of scientific and literary folk, besides studying the politics and social movements of my own and European Governments. Among my friends I passed for a man of more than average capacity, some insisting that I needed ambition only to take good rank among the leaders of society. Perhaps these were right; nevertheless, I had long treasured, deep in my soul, the thought that sometime the "wave" would come which I should take "at the flood" and so "roll on to fortune." In the main, however, my aspirations were modest, and if given to study and

travel, in some respects it was because such lines of mental avocation were pleasant and I gained thereby what seemed to me more worthy of respect by much than the physical emoluments that are estimated by the dollar standard.

When the demure German maid responded to my ring at 78 Church Terrace she looked at me gravely and said :

“He not dere; he gone—to-day.”

“Is there no message? Did he not leave any word for me—Mr. Browne?”

“Oh, may be; you wait, blease.” She darted upstairs, but soon returned, holding a small packet in her hand.

“Dis for you? Your name, ‘Browne’ on it.”

I took it. “And this is all?”

“Dat’s all. Mister Res’ling say if you come to look on der table, and dell you he vas gone.”

“Thank you. Good evening.”

“Goot-by, Mister Browne,” and the door closed, while I turned and left the house. Noting that the packet was sealed and tied with double thread I placed it in my breast pocket, and made my way home by the most direct route.

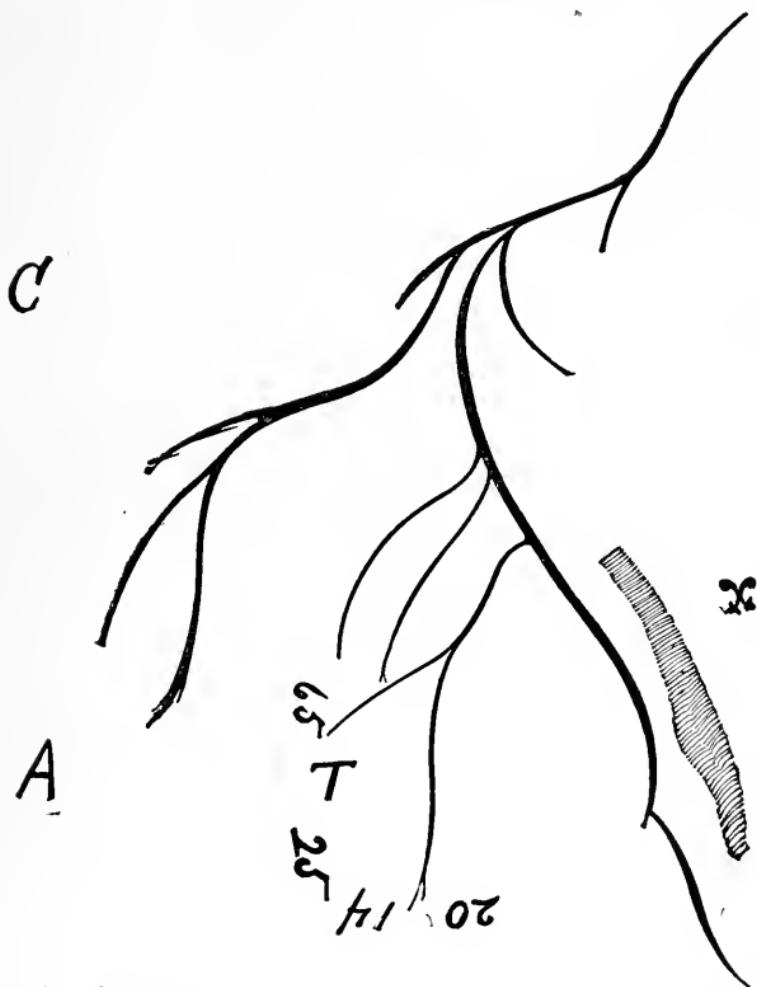
In the quiet of my room I drew out the little souvenir, for such I expected to find it of a brief yet pleasant companionship, and opened it. A folded sheet of paper and a two-leaved card were its contents. On the paper was written the following:

“MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND: Regretting the necessity for sudden departure—there is no choice in the matter by the terms of our Royal Law—I frankly admit that in our few meetings I had grown to like you. It is impossible to venture a thought in regard to another visit on my part here. You have said that you would like to visit Oudemon. Such a visit is a possibility to one of a tactful and venturesome nature, provided——. You have won my confidence. If you should make the attempt to travel far southward and find our country your quest might not prove vain. If you are sincere in the desire, and I believe that you are, the inclosed card may be of service. Keep it safely for one month. If at the end of that time your mind is not made up with respect to the undertaking, destroy the card, keeping no memorandum of any part of it. By so doing you will make an end of what is intended only for your eyes and use, and at the same time oblige the writer of this message. We may meet again; the Good One may will it. So a happy meeting soon! A. R.”

I read this farewell slowly and meditatively, and then examined the card. The exposed sides were blank; opening it one side revealed a number of lines and marks which are here reproduced:

The other side contained what appeared to be a series of notes in a peculiar character not unlike the stenographic outlines of the old Pitman system.

When I had the stranger's notebook in my hand and was commenting on the excellent workmanship of its maker, I caught glimpses of leaves containing characters which I then supposed to be a kind of short-



hand. Now those on the card recalled the marks in the notebook. Here was a problem evidently devised for my solution, and upon my success in solving it would depend my ability to find and scale the frowning outposts of that mysterious Oudemon.

CHAPTER II.

THE MESSAGE IN CIPHER.

EVERY normal man has his confidential friends. I had; and although unmarried at the mature age of thirty-six it is not to be supposed that there was no woman in whose society I did not find pleasure and comfort. By natural inclination I was social, and entertained a high esteem for women. The only son of three children, my mother had always shown great fondness for me, and after my tenth year she had treated me as a companion more than as a boy or subordinate. She took much pride in my maturing powers of mind and body, and after the death of father, although I was barely twenty she looked to me for the performance of those duties that belong to the man as guardian of the family. My sisters were both older than myself, had married before they were twenty-five, and for several years after the younger one had gone with her husband to set up their own household, mother and I lived in the old home, with the pleasant environment of friends and acquaintances that had grown with its continuance.

A year before the meeting with Restling my mother had gone to live with her elder daughter,

who filially enough had insisted upon the step, pleading that she needed a mother's counsel and companionship more than a big old bachelor of a son did, who ought to have a wife and home of his own, and not expect to monopolize the time and affection of his mother when she had other children whose rights in her were as good as his, if not better. I had indeed met with young women who were in every way desirable for wives, but when one at thirty has a good mother and a very comfortable home he does not feel the impulse toward matrimony that the young, homeless and motherless bachelor does—especially in the presence of good opportunities. I will own that there was just then a young woman for whose good opinion I entertained some solicitude, and whose company I frequently sought. We had been friends for a long time, and had become intimate enough to feel a certain satisfaction in conferring with each other regarding matters that appeared of more than average importance in life's routine. No expression of love had passed between us, yet, for my own part, had occasion led to a fancy for any other woman, my conscience or chivalric spirit would probably have compelled me to think that Olive Helane had claims for consideration that should not be lightly ignored. Olive was a teacher in a well-known institute, receiving a respectable salary for her services as instructor in Latin and rhetoric. This fact made her independent so far as support was concerned, of father and family, and

being thirty years old she was mature enough to act for herself in social and other affairs.

Of course, I told Olive about the stranger from Oudemon, and we speculated gravely on his purpose in visiting our city, and exchanged guesses as to the whereabouts of his mysterious country and the character of his people. I desired greatly to show his letter to her, but the terms of confidence in which it was penned were so definite I felt myself under bonds to keep silence, even regarding the fact of a message from him.

At once I grappled with the problem set by the stranger friend. The sketch on one leaf of the card has been already exhibited, and to that I refer the reader for a moment; for after some reflection I concluded that this sketch was probably an outline of certain features of the country near or adjoining Oudemon. The study of a large map of South America strengthened the conclusion. The letters C. A. T. I thought represented settlements more or less important, which I shall leave to the guessing faculty of the readers to make out, especially as I have given them a clue or two that I was compelled to divine for myself. The figures 14-20, 65-25 gave me no little trouble, and for some days no satisfactory headway was made with them, until their obscurity was cleared up in a way as simple as it was unexpected. While scanning the Bolivian frontier and estimating the distance of different points thereon from Rio de Janeiro the query sprang into

my mind, May not these numbers have something to do with latitude and longitude? Employing them in this sense, and comparing the locality of the peculiar cross mark in the sketch with the map I was persuaded that I had found a point of important service. Later the discovery was confirmed, as will be seen.

Turning now to the peculiar marks or writing on the other leaf of the card I scrutinized them one by one, and made a list of them, placing in groups those of similar outline. Several hours were devoted to this task, with the final inference that I was dealing certainly with a species of stenography, the characters of which, in letter and word outline, were simpler than those of Graham or Reed. Every day I gave time to this study when leisure permitted retirement to some place where I could be free from interruption. At the beginning I presumed too much upon my knowledge of shorthand as it had been learned in youth; for, try as I would, the outlines of Restling's memorandum, by comparison with the characters familiar to my experience furnished no consistent result, and the conclusion forced itself upon the mind that I had to deal with an entirely different system of writing from that in vogue with the stenographers and reporters of our city.

There were thirty-nine separate outlines which I accepted as representing so many distinct words. Analysis of these words showed them composed of

one hundred and seventy-two distinct characters. Classified, these showed three letters standing alone, eight words of two letters, seven of three letters, nine of four letters, six of five letters, seven of six letters, one of seven letters, three of nine letters. In these I found the following repetitions, which, according to the rule of probabilities, I assumed to be those of characters representing vowels or their compound sounds: One was repeated eighteen times, another sixteen times, another sixteen times also, another fifteen times, another eleven times. The two occurring most frequently I supposed to be a and e; that is, a or e was one of those occurring sixteen times, and I was equally sure that the consonant t was to be regarded as occurring frequently, but subordinately of course to the common vowels a and e.

My attempts to spell out words, however, proved lamentable failures, and despite all experimentation three weeks passed without a result that could be accepted as positive. Then a half holiday was devoted to the puzzle. I sat at the window of my room in a fine light with the card in my hand, my eyes bent upon those mystical outlines, scanning them in a listless manner, for my confidence in my power to translate them into intelligent language was beginning to weaken, when I detected a faint sign or character in one corner of the card which the better light than usual brought out. I now examined the other corners and found that in each of

them was also a delicately traced outline. Seizing a magnifying glass I made out clearly four characters corresponding with four I had isolated on my list. Trembling with excitement I asked, half aloud: "May these not be the key to the puzzle? Are they not representative of the alphabet I am searching for?" One of these characters was similar to that of which I counted the eighteen repetitions, and another similar to one of the sixteen repetitions. Ah, one of these *must* be a and the other e; then, to my delight, I discovered that two of the key outlines corresponded to two of the three characters that stood alone in the stranger's notes. I now felt a thrill of encouragement to persist. The memorandum was not written with an ordinary lead pencil, but with some kind of a metallic point that permitted very delicate tracing on such paper as had been used. Employing the magnifier, I examined the outlines throughout closely and found little marks like half circles under certain parts of many word outlines, and these I compared with the key marks in the corners, until I was sure that one of the oft repeated words was *and*, while another probably read *acts*.

I now experienced a buoyancy of heart that augured well for success, and I continued the study of the cipher text with new vigor. With half a dozen symbols for as many letters of the alphabet which appeared to meet every test, I thenceforth made substantial progress in translating the Oudemont message, good guesses or a favoring Provi-

dence aiding so happily that when the dinner bell rang I had solved the meaning of more than half the word outlines; and believed that my work was nearly accomplished. After dinner, a meal that engaged little of my usual zest, I hurried back to my room and resumed the labor of translating the message. Fortunately no interruption occurred that night to break the current of endeavor, and by midnight I had fairly completed my task; at least, the total result had so rational an expression, that I sought my bed with as much satisfaction as an inventor might be supposed to feel who believes that he has finished the design of an invention long worked upon. This is my rendering of the strange visitor's message:

From C west—the cataracts before you, at bending of great river, southward follow.

Beware, the mountains, left—

Till rivers three, and T—depart by  east till sun decide.

Tarry *alone* and upward look;
Guard well—fear not.

A CONSULTATION.

In this, as I firmly believed, I had a few hints for my guidance to that isolated country. Making a copy in the shorthand with which I was familiar, I deposited the original memorandum in my little safe and for days thereafter reflected upon a plan of

action. To Olive I announced the possibility of a voyage to South America. A little before this Don Pedro had communicated officially with our Government in reference to certain plans for colony enterprise in Brazil, and public attention had been directed to the enormous country over which he was the liberal and kind ruler. Glowing accounts had filled many newspaper columns regarding the possibilities of development there in every line of industry and trade, and many Americans were heard declaring that they would prefer the chances of success offered by so new a country to further effort at home, where sharp competition in all lines of activity discouraged men of average capacity and means. For myself I considered the United States large enough as a field of action for all honest men, whatever the difference in capacity, and that it was therefore big enough for me, but a trip to Brazil to make a tour of the country for the purpose of seeing what it was like would be only another of my occasional escapades from business routine.

“Why, there isn’t much to be seen in Brazil but Indians, half-breeds, some Portuguese, vast forests, rubber camps, great rivers and swamps and a few coast cities of importance,” remarked Olive, fixing her large eyes gravely on my face. “It would be pleasant, no doubt, for a water fowl like you to sail along that great extent of coast, but you would soon tire of the wildness of the country, Malcolm Browne, and of its many inconveniences of travel, if you

attempted to leave the more civilized coast and go into the interior. Why, from my reading of those who have ventured much into that country, it must be a good deal like Africa, so far as our knowledge of it is concerned. There are immense stretches of plain and mountain ranges of which little comparatively is known. Then, too, I have read," the girl continued, in a tone of dread, "that there are wild people in some of the deeper parts who are real cannibals. Oh, you won't venture there?"

"No, believe me, my solicitous maid, I shall not expose my precious carcass unnecessarily to such hungry anthropophagists—I believe that's what your scientific gentlemen delicately term them," I returned, with a laugh.

"Well, we don't realize what a land that is beneath the sun, Malcolm. Think of it, a tremendous country nearly as big as all Europe. Have you ever heard of anybody traveling entirely through it from east to west, say from Rio de Janeiro or Pernambuco to Bolivia?"

"No, I must admit, Olive, that I do not remember any instance of such adventurous temerity. I have read of the Amazon country to some extent; of its wondrous vegetation, its peculiar races, its rubber seekers; yet that part of Brazil has been far from explored, and probably less is positively known of the great southern and western districts where, we are told, are wide expanses of high tableland and bordering mountain peaks, with an abundant variety of

water scenery—wherein, as a water fowl, I should be quite at home, you know."

"How long would you be gone?" the girl quietly asked, apparently without notice of my response to her playful hit at my known *penchant* for water travel.

"I can scarcely say, for I think that there will be so much of novelty in a tour of this kind that I shall not feel disposed to hurry."

"I wonder, Malcolm, if this strange man you have told me about is not the real cause of your new fancy. You intimated that he was from South America somewhere. I hope, my dear boy, you don't entertain some sudden—"

"Don't worry on my account, little girl. I shall not risk much aside from my precious carcass."

"Oh, I know that you set much store by that—well, no doubt it is pleasant to see things that are not commonly known. You don't find many guide books to Brazil or the Argentines on the market, I guess."

"No, I can obtain only the most general information about the parts I have in view."

"But this going always alone, Malcolm; haven't you had enough of it?"

"Seriously, Olive, I will say yes. You know what I told you of certain inconvenient experiences when on my last trip abroad—what happened in the Nile country, quite alone among the fellahs. Then I vowed it would be the last time I should go

any great distance and among strange people without company of some sort. When a chap gets sick and hasn't a friend within two thousand miles he is apt to feel blue."

"But Malcolm has a way of recovering his true color, it seems, and forgetting vows, and then your mother—"

"Yes, mother is tired of my vagabondizing and wants me settled in life. I suspect she's right. But when a man's seen thirty-six summers—"

"Or winters," interpolated Olive, smiling.

"Yes, you're right about the winters; the thirty-sixth summer isn't quite gone yet—it's full time that he was cultivating his own fireside. When I get back I am going to take the matter into serious consideration—I am, now."

"Did you never think seriously about it?" asked the girl in a tone that led me to gaze fixedly at her for a moment or two. She sat, with her eyes averted, as if studying a Japanese screen that was spread in all its brilliant hues on the hearthstone. I had given her that screen for her last birthday.

"Yes, Olive, there have been lucid intervals when some reflections have occupied my mind with respect to my lonesome bachelorhood. But the fact that, odd old fossil as I may be, there are some excellent people to whom I can go when I please and find comfort—"

"But changes come—friends depart, and there

are the transitory and hollow conditions of boarding-house life—and——”

“Permit me to carry on the thought, my solicitous mentor. There are the friends who tolerate you for what use you may be to them, and in spite of your good qualities consider you a crank because you don’t marry, and be contented as a reasonable man should——”

“Oh, I didn’t mean that,” she broke in; “you are very good. I don’t see anything of the crank in you——”

It seemed to me that there was the suspicion of a tear in her eye, and I must own that my own feelings were strongly aroused by the marked seriousness of her manner. However, I affected a degree of gayety and said.

“Who knows that I may not meet some dark-eyed señorita down beneath the equator who will make captive my vagabond heart—what an unexpected home-bringing that would be!”

“And so romantic!” added Olive. “But you are long past twenty, and have seen many dark-eyed and light-eyed señoritas. They say, though, those semi-Spanish maidens in South America are very fascinating. Yet you are not going to give your faith, I know, to even a mighty hidalgo’s daughter without due reflection.”

I rose to go and said, in parting, with her hand in mine: “You know, Olive, that I esteem your opinion and good sense too highly to think of taking any

serious step without having your views upon it. Good-night."

She laughed in a way that intimated her pleasure and looked up at me, the rich blood tinging cheek and forehead. "Good-night, Malcolm; the little wisdom I may have is always at your service."

With this parting assurance of the excellent young woman floating in my sensorium, I walked down the avenue. Yes, I was well on toward middle life, and as fully equipped mentally and physically as I should ever be for marriage and a settled life. The little *tête-à-tête* just ended had fairly determined the voyage to South America, and a search for Oudemon. Successful or not in finding the object of the trip, I should not lose by it; for many things would be learned of the nations and people below the Equator; and when I returned I should look around for a wife. Somehow as I thought upon the marriage topic a feeling of calm invested my spirit. Was it because of Olive? Let the reader speculate in regard to that!

A VISION OF THE NIGHT.

"A good conscience makes a soft pillow," one of the characters in an old play remarks. Whether or not I can claim a conscience more free of burdens than the average man, it is certain that my sleep comes easily, as a rule, and is not much disturbed or seasoned by conscious dreaming. Naturally

one would expect his visions of the night to partake of the nature of experiences met in the day. Abercrombie and later psychologists interpret our dreams according to impressions received for the most part in active life. Your light sleeper is the best dreamer. A touch, a sound, a change of position in bed, may start a dream, harmonious or grotesque, according to the mental sensation produced. Often the strangeness of a dream is due mainly to the irregular or incomplete fancies that faculties but partly awake supply. The philosophy of sleep has not been perfectly formulated yet, nor has its physiology been quite definitely settled, so that there is considerable latitude for indulging our taste in speculations, be they rational or colored by notions of mystery and supernaturalism.

I had been asleep for two hours that night of the talk with Olive when I awoke, or believed myself to be awake. Opening my eyes, I saw in the dim sheen that filtered through the well-drawn shades from the street lamp the form of Archbold Restling. He was attired in a costume evidently worn for sleep—a loose-fitting robe dropping to the ankles and a cap of some lustrous stuff. His face had that peacefully genial expression that would have sufficed for its identification in any circumstances. No time was given me to feel surprise or to ask, under my breath, what he was doing here, for it seemed that I had no sooner discovered his presence than I heard his voice: "You have read the message. I am pleased

that you have decided to come to Oudemon. We shall expect you. If difficulties occur on the way do not hesitate to go on. Keep close to the river until the great stone mountains appear to block the way. Remember, then, to proceed without fear.” As he finished the brief sentence he pointed toward the corner where stood my secretary and disappeared. Certainly my eyes were wide open, and noted the sudden effacement, but, as with the beginning of the vision, I felt no surprise, and merely turned over and fell asleep again. Was this only a freak of the imagination consequent upon the earnest and almost constant thought that had been given to the stranger during the past four weeks; or was it an “impression” transmitted in the manner of the Oudemon sages? Never had I considered myself capable of being the medium or object of psychic communication; indeed, the accounts read and heard of mental impressions, “telepathic” and otherwise designated, obtained but scant respect from me; and if now conviction of their truth was to be demonstrated in my own consciousness——!

While dressing next morning my thoughts were absorbed by queries of this kind, and no relief to the uncertainty was found in any explanation that I attempted on rational principles—such as I had previously accepted. A glimpse of my secretary reminded me of the spook’s departing gesture. My pocket notebook lay upon the writing tablet. I was prompted to pick it up and open it, and then to thumb

the leaves until the last entry of the day before was reached. But there was something more, an addition to my brief memorandum that caused a tremor to float through my entire body. In strongly defined strokes, almost covering the page, appeared this cabalistic design,  and under it the single word "REMEMBER," boldly written. For a minute or two I stood there, with the book in my hand, looking fixedly at the figure and the admonition. Was I bewitched, "possessed" or what? How many times in the course of that day did I take out the notebook and turn to the leaf whereon the figure appeared in all its sharp outline, for doubt regarding the normality of my senses kept intruding itself upon my thought. Finally, to put an end to the worry I was beginning to experience, I asked a clerk in the office what he thought of the appropriateness of a design such as that for a medal, showing him the figure on the leaf of my notebook. "Oh, that's too simple," said he. "If I were going to get up anything I should borrow from the antique, say the Alexandrian."

"Well, tastes differ," I replied; "the simpler, the better, according to my idea."

So it was to be concluded that I had been the recipient of a vivid ocular impression, with a material demonstration evident enough to the eyes of others; and I sought to make peace with my intellectual judgment by supposing that in my sleep I

had drawn the figure and written the word of counsel. But what manner of people were these Oudemonites that they could communicate at will with others so far from the confines of their own land. Verily, they must be of a type unusual, and worthy the study of anthropologist and psychologist, to say nothing of the economist, and he who seeks novelty and entertainment.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE JOURNEY.

Two weeks later I sailed for the Southern hemisphere, by one of the Pacific mail steamers. Let me pass over the incidents of the voyage to Panama, the crossing of that narrow band of rock and earth separating two great oceans, and the trip down to Callao, the C of Restling's message, it may be assumed, fully spelled out. A few days were spent in that Peruvian seaport, to complete what preparations were necessary for my expedition into the interior. Believing myself now fairly entered upon a course, the dénouement of which was not far off, and likely to be replete with extraordinary incidents, my feelings were in that state of tense excitement that permits of little attention to things not connected with the purpose in view. If Oudemon were a real place I must see it ere many days. If I had been lured all the way to this sub-equatorial sky by an evil genius, or to be made the dupe of a heinous joke, I was equally anxious to know it. Yet in the midst of this intense and anxious consciousness a singular calm possessed my soul, an unusual confidence that I had not traveled so far in vain.

Taking the —— railway I rode to its east-

ern terminus, at a straggling mining settlement in the Andes. Securing there a horse and a mounted native for companion and guide, I continued the eastward course. Possibly the reader would be entertained by a description of the widely diversified country through which we penetrated, were there space for it. Now rough and precipitous mountain trails, then broad valleys, luxuriant with semi-tropical growth; again long reaches of plain, almost desert in their lack of plant and animal life. Some days the route was so encompassed with difficulties that night found us worn with fatigue, horse and man, and but a few miles added to the march. Fortunately my guide was informed regarding the country for a considerable distance along the Bolivian and Brazilian border.* To my inquiries he gave answers that satisfied me that the falls mentioned in Restling's plan of the course were those of the Madeira, and the G referred to was most likely the Guapore. It was clear enough that I need not go up to the falls, so I requested my guide to use his best judgment in pursuing our way, that we might reach the Guapore Valley as soon as possible. As Callao is situated longitudinally, the point toward which my steps were directed was, according to the data I had for calculation, not far from eleven hundred miles, and it seemed best to trust to my companion's discretion to pick out the way over the ranges as obliquely as

* A region far from explored as yet.

might be consistent with the difficulties of the march. Having provided myself with a pocket compass, and a small quadrant, the use of which I had learned from a naval officer, I took daily observations, and so kept close account of our progress. When fairly in Bolivia our way became comparatively easy, and there were days that found us at twilight a good fifty miles from the point of departure in the morning.

We had been out from Callao twenty-two days when a great stretch of low meadow and swampy land was reached. "I believe, señor, we be in the Guapore," said my guide. In the distance a thin, cloudy line announced a mountain range.

"What hills are those?" I asked.

"Me know not; no cross big river here anyway," he said. In reply to guarded questions with reference to the country beyond the visible range, the man appeared to have no definite knowledge. Besides vague ideas of settlements here and there of people who mined or kept stock or cultivated the soil for certain products, he knew little of the country south or east of where we now were, insisting that for many hundred miles the region was so marshy and rough that it was almost impossible to travel eastward to any considerable distance, and what few people lived "over river" were Indians or half-breeds who were not to be trusted. He intimated, in fact, that if it were my intention to go much farther south he should ask to be released, as

he had already accompanied me a greater distance than he expected, and had decided to go to Trinidad on his way back.

We had covered seventy miles more, perhaps, when we stopped at a small plantation or hacienda of half a dozen houses for the night. The head man of the place, Señor Miquel, invited me to stop a while with him. He had a sheep ranch, and cultivated tobacco, which employed most of the little colony. Strangers were rare in Miquel's camp, and a North American was so unusually seen in that quarter of the world that the ranchers welcomed me rather fervidly, I thought. He knew a little English and I had picked up some Spanish on the way, so that we could talk together in a fashion, and I soon learned that he was a West Indian by birth, but, having been expatriated on account of political opinions, had gone to that remote region with a few family dependents, and built up the little colony. The second morning after our arrival at this point my guide took his leave, advising, as he departed, that it would be well for me to be on my guard, for it was not good to be too free with any of "dose peeble."

Yielding to Miquel's urgent and really hearty kindness, I remained in his rough house three days. During this time every opportunity was sought to obtain information that had any bearing upon my journey's object. Very little of satisfying nature was to be had; and that concerned only

the character of the country a hundred miles or so south of the ranch. If I intended to go east it was impossible because a few miles beyond the river the trail came to an end; and the country was wild and the very few people to be met were Indians and hunters, or bandits, for the most part. I told Miquel that I was desirous of prospecting in that region, and should not go farther south, it was likely, than sixty or seventy miles, and might be glad to return to his settlement after a few days. He offered to accompany me beyond the river, and placed at my service a young horse, taking mine in exchange. As his proffer of companionship was evidently well meant, I accepted it promptly.

THE CABALISTIC GUIDE.

While arranging my pack for the start in the little room that had been allotted me by the ranchero I glanced casually through one of the small, paneless windows, when my attention was at once riveted to a man who stood perhaps thirty feet from the house, leaning against a tree. The dress and stature of the man were similar, it seemed at first, to those of Restling. As I gazed at him he slowly stood erect, and on the lapel of his coat there glittered in the early sunlight a metallic fac-simile of the figure drawn in my notebook that night of the dream or vision. Yielding to impulse, I dashed out of the room

and through the two others to the main doorway of the house, which opened on the side toward the tree. But no sooner out of the building than I saw that the man was gone, and a hasty search of the neighborhood failed to reveal him. Meeting my host, he asked: "What was come? You look much sorry." I explained as best I could that I had seen a mysterious stranger a few minutes before, and could not find him; then described his appearance. "Oh, him," he said. "I see—two, tree times. He mus' live up dere," pointing southward. "He mine, me t'ink." Whether the señor understood what I had told him, or not, this incident both puzzled and encouraged me. If only another hallucination, assuming that the vision of the night at home was of that nature, it was to be taken as a good omen.

Miquel rode with me a good forty miles, and we spent the night together in a wreck of a cabin found in a clump of brush on the river bank—some herder's work, probably. It afforded protection against the heavy dew and possibly served as a defence against attack by some hungry beast. Three or four miles farther we came to a point where the stream widened and its bed was very shallow, little islets appearing above its rippling surface here and there. A crossing was effected successfully; only in mid-channel was it necessary for our horses to swim, and that for a short distance. Having seen me safely on the east bank, the señor now bade me

adieu and recrossed. The point was well chosen, for the ground here proved excellent for travel, a narrow plateau stretching southward as far as the eye could reach. To the east at a distance, as I estimated, of fifteen miles, the mountains reared their broken and uninviting summits, and as I proceeded their giant masses appeared to become more precipitous and forbidding. A warm, hazy day, the few trees or clumps of brush that were met with were welcomed for the temporary shade they afforded. Twelve miles or so from the crossing point I encountered a large patch of brush and scrub oak, and made my way through it leisurely enough, because of the thick undergrowth. On emerging what should I see, directly in my course and not fifty feet distant, but the same man I had noticed at the ranch the previous morning. The badge was glittering in the sunlight, as then. This time, however, there was no disappearance, but an approach on his part, as I rode toward him.

“Are you?——” escaped my lips almost involuntarily.

“Yes,” he replied smilingly, extending his hand. I sprang from my pony and grasped it.

“It was you I saw yesterday?”

“Yes, Malcolm, we knew of your coming from the time you left Callao.”

“Indeed, and how could you know that?” I exclaimed.

“Their impressions satisfied our councillors and I

came down to meet you. The conditions were well fulfilled. We have but eleven miles now to go, Malcolm, and then we ascend into Oudemon."

"But I am told by everybody that I cannot get across those cliffs to the east, my dear sir."

"In the way these people cross hills, no. Our way is different. The sun is high; have you eaten?"

"Not since breakfast with Señor Miquel."

"Then it will be well to stop here and have a meal, for our course now lies that way," pointing to the mountains, "as you expect, and the footing is not easy. But the Señor gave you a good little horse, I see, Malcolm."

This messenger was provided with many things that a traveler would not expect to find in that lonely region. Where he had stored them I knew not. It seemed like the magic of Hermann when he produced some delicious oranges, and bananas, most appetizing biscuits, a bottle, or rather conical box, filled with cocoa juice so cool that one would think it had come from the ice. The coarse, hard biscuit, cheese and lime juice that I had brought in my pack were wretchedly poor fare in comparison. My new guide distributed his excellent menu, and we ate, talking meanwhile of my experiences.

A DIFFICULT COURSE.

The sun had declined twenty degrees from the zenith ere we rose from a prandial exercise that had

been the most agreeable and satisfying to my appetite since leaving the coast, and began the final course in my long journey. Passing up out of the river plain a few miles, we found ourselves in a much rougher section. There was no road or path, no trail marks were visible, at least to my eyes, and with our upward advance the surface became more broken and difficult, until it was evident that we were ascending a series of terrace-like elevations, on which a scraggy growth of tree and bush, interspersed with rock, gravel, fissures, mounds, and an occasional very erratic water course in a deep-cut channel, offered obstacles that would have intimidated even a Stanley with so small an escort in a country entirely unknown. Had I not been "personally conducted," under auspices of so peculiar a nature that my utmost confidence was challenged, I should never have taken that direction, since it was leading me nowhere, if not directly to those impossible cliffs that seemed at every step to rear their gray summits to loftier heights. At times our way became so precipitous and dangerous that only the intelligence, skill and strength of my conductor rendered it possible for us to proceed. Now and then our united force was necessary to enable my pony, true blood mountaineer as she proved herself, to get up to our level. I had been in the Swiss Alps and knew the skill of the guides there, but had never seen courage and adroitness displayed to the degree that this Oudemonite showed. Three times I pro-

tested against trying to bring up the horse, insisting that it was unnecessary, if not impossible, to accomplish it. But he mildly said: "It would not be kind, Malcolm, to leave the poor pony there; he would starve or perhaps break his neck." So the impossible was done in a way that kept me wondering at his ingenuity and strength.

Finally we reached a plateau of comparatively smooth surface and some acres in extent. Judging by the sun, we had consumed three hours in our laborious march upward, and now some patches of soft grass and a group of low trees suggested rest. I was fatigued enough and threw myself down upon the ground, while our jaded animal companion be-took himself to a little stream and lapped the tepid water with evident satisfaction.

"We will stay here for a while," said my guide.

"Yes," was my thankful rejoinder. "I am thoroughly tired. This is the hardest road I ever struck."

"We have not much farther to go," he replied, with a low laugh. "You are expected to supper with Archbold and other friends, Malcolm, and after some rest we will ascend."

"What, we are near the journey's end?"

He smiled, and laughed again. Westward there was spread out a glorious prospect, the declining sun lighting up the diversity of detail with an enchanting distinctness. Far below, the river I had crossed in the morning wound in and out, a silver ribbon

amid the emerald and brown of the valley. Not a village or settlement of any kind was visible to the unassisted eye—only a few straggling groups of horses or cattle, as made out with the small field glass I carried in my pocket. What possibilities of industry to the hardy pioneer who yearned for the quiet and isolation of a virgin wilderness were suggested by that vast expanse of unbroken soil! On the reverse, eastward, what? I had not yet realized it. Now I saw only a precipitous wall, stretching to north and south, and inclosing us in an upright concavity. A sensation of awe crept through my frame. Certainly everything conspired to produce a most profound impression upon an average man. At length I looked at my companion; he was standing at a little distance gazing upward, as if expecting a signal from the cliff top. After a moment or two I said:

“Well, my friend, this is a strange and wonderful place. I have come many miles expecting strange things and at present am realizing in a very unusual fashion that the world is far from known to me. You have brought me to the most remarkable place that I have ever seen; and many of the world’s most famous landscapes have received my attention; yet—is this but preparatory?”

He replied, intermitting his upward look for a moment only: “You will see and hear things not common in your country, stranger friend. You may not think us remarkable for business and enterprise,

as such things are accounted among your people, and many objects you are fond of we do not highly esteem. Our habits as friends and in the family may be different from what you call proper. Let me ask you now to be kind in your judgment of what you may see, and let your opinion take form from the general effect of our customs upon the community."

"Be sure," was returned warmly, "I shall try to remember that I am your guest and certainly it would be a breach of courtesy did I not endeavor to adapt myself to your practices and manners, especially when the samples of the Oudemont folk with whom I have consorted so far, compel my respect and admiration."

He smiled in a pleased way and said: "We cannot ask more from you, Malcolm, and shall not."

AN ELEVATING COSTUME.

'A soft rustle as of wings here caused me to look up, and I saw two large birds of the crow species descending, apparently from the cliffs. In a few seconds they had alighted at the feet of my guide. Attached to each was a light package or roll of fine silky-looking cloth. This he untied, when the birds flew away, but not in the direction whence they had come.

"We have now the means for our ascent," remarked my companion as he unrolled the fabric and

displayed a broad, baggy-looking contrivance, narrowed or pleated in the center with bits of ribbon or tape set at points along one margin. "We will put on these." There were openings, into which, with his assistance, I inserted my arms; then he tied the apparatus to my neck and body by means of the tapes, the elasticity of the tissue rendering the contact close. Without help from me, Julius, as I learned shortly afterward was his name, fitted himself with the apparatus while I looked on curiously.

"Now we will go to the source and inflate."

I followed him to a little, cave-like excavation in the rocky wall just large enough to screen three or four persons from sight. From a projection in the roof he took down a metal tube of small diameter and about four feet in length. "I will treat myself to some gas," he playfully remarked, "and then you can take your turn."

"We are going to emulate the angels!" I rejoined.

"In a sort of human fashion," said he.

"Am I then to infer that you excellent people have solved the problem of aerostation?"

"In part, and sufficiently for our necessary purposes. We do not quite fly, but we can rise and move to any point it is desirable to reach; and this simple arrangement is one of our methods. This fabric, as you see, is very light and fine, yet strong, elastic, and perfectly gas proof. It will endure a great amount of rough usage before breaking."

At one side of the cave Julius disclosed a bronze

pipe projecting a few inches above the rock. The tubing taken from the wall was inserted into the bronze pipe by one end and the other into a valvular opening provided in the singular garment we had adjusted to our bodies. Pressure upon a small knob near the mouth of the pipe was followed by a hissing sound, and in a short time Julius had swollen to over three feet broad from hip to shoulder, the larger fulness being above. His appearance to eyes unaccustomed to the spectacle was little short of grotesque; I could not repress a laugh.

“Well, Malcolm, it is your turn; let me have my fun with you,” said he, disconnecting the tube from his bloated figure.

“No doubt I shall be a burlesque of you, my good boy. But tell me what is this gas you obtain from the earth?”

“It is a natural product which we found some years ago oozing from the ground—mostly hydrogen with by-products, one or two of which are even lighter. Our wise men believe that if human beings are to fly, without some great change in their physical constitution, they must use some fluid that will enable them to float in the air. This simple mechanism we find to be quite safe for the common purpose of scaling difficult heights. When you are blown up you will find it impossible almost to fall.”

In a few minutes I was transformed in the manner of Julius, and on attempting to walk was amazed by the lightness of my limbs. They seemed

to move and rise in simple obedience to my will; the muscular effort was so slight that at first it appeared quite lacking. Only in putting the feet down upon *terra firma* was there a decided sensation of effort. I rolled or skimmed about, rather than walked.

“I believe that I could go up hill much easier than down in this toggery,” I said, after venturing a few steps.

“Yes, but after a little practice you will find it very easy to go anywhere.” Saying this my companion leaped up and rose fully to the height of thirty feet, then descended at so moderate a speed that any fears I had entertained on the score of falling while we should be scaling that great wall were quite dissipated.

“You have given me great confidence in my power of self-elevation,” I said, laughing, “but don’t ask me to try a jump yet, for I might land somewhere off there by the river.”

A peculiar tone sounded in the air like a soft note of the bassoon. “They are waiting, and have lowered the cord. Let us go up.”

“But my horse!”

“She will do well enough here, be assured, Malcolm, and I will attach your luggage to the rope.”

Going then to the base of the cliff, we found the loose end of a thin line hanging within reach, and at a signal given by Julius this was lowered until it touched the ground. At distances of four feet or

so there were loops in the line, a convenience decidedly gratifying to a novice like myself at this kind of travel. My companion grasped the cord and sprang up several feet.

“A little confidence and you will get on well. Just look up and follow close to me.”

Of course I would not attempt to start like that, so taking hold of one of the loops, I began to pull on it. I say began, for it was only a beginning when I found myself leaving the ground with a sensation not unlike that of a man who tries the “express” elevator in a tall building for the first time. The inflated dress nearly compensated my weight in that clear air, and it seemed, after the start, that I had only to make the hand over hand movements of the sailor in ascending the shrouds to go up as rapidly as I pleased. The line, however, was necessary to me, I soon realized, for so buoyant was the costume that had I let go its guidance for a moment the light breeze playing near the wall would probably have carried me to some distance from it.

When a boy I had been not a little given to gymnastic exercises, and the training had served me to good purpose during my life. Here it enabled me to climb in so novel a fashion with much less awkwardness than would have been inevitable to muscles that had received no training. It must not be supposed that my conductor neglected me. By no means; now and then he floated at my level and gave some hints regarding the use of hands or feet, and

had words of very pleasant approval of the progress I was making. At times a strange feeling would invade my nerves, a giddiness prompted, it is likely, by the thought of being participant in a most extraordinary excursion, and of its possible consequences to my precious skull should the delicate-looking tissue that contained the gas spring a leak, but the higher I ascended the less such feeling affected me, and in its place came a sense of confidence in my guide and myself.

“We are nearing the top,” said Julius. “A few hundred feet more and we shall be on the verge of our country.”

And soon we were at the summit of the awe-inspiring ridge, there to be assisted, on my part at least, by the welcoming hands and cordial greeting of two men who also had on the aerial dress. A moment’s inspection showed that we were standing on a narrow platform of rock, the eastern side of which, like that I had just mounted, was almost vertical in elevation, but not to the depth of the western. The sun was setting now in the far horizon, yet in the clear twilight sky of the eastern prospect I could see many houses and tower-like structures whose windows reflected the orange and blue tints, while the varied green of meadow, woodland and garden lent its coloring to heighten the picture that, for a time, fastened my gaze.

There were no buildings towering in preposterous altitude and ugly hugeness against the sky—only

here and there a glimpse of a symmetrical structure was caught that rose above the neighboring trees and offered its soft brown in picturesque contrast to the green of tree and meadow, and its loftier height as a pleasant feature in the wide landscape.

Turning from the scene of beauty I remarked: "We have come up to go down, friends?"

"Yes, Malcolm, unless you would prefer to pass the night up here and commune with the stars," replied one, a mirthful twinkle dancing in his eye.

"No doubt it would be glorious, but I would prefer an astronomical study a little later. With your permission I should like a closer acquaintance with that beautiful landscape," pointing downward. "Have I been introduced in this unique fashion to the 'Happy Valley' of Rasselas?"

"We hope that you will not be disappointed in what you find here, Malcolm."

Thus it was "Malcolm," "Malcolm," "Malcolm." Had my name become so familiar among these people already?

The line was now drawn up with my luggage attached, not an easy pull, considering the height of the crest, and then lowered on the other side. There were people below whose voices came faintly to the ear, and who signaled when the burdened line reached down to them. Then we descended, a depth of eighteen hundred feet, they said—but so easy and effortless it seemed that had it been five times as

great I should have enjoyed the motion downward highly. With one hand loosely encircling the cord I gently sank until, amid the happy exclamations of a hundred or more expectant people, I found my feet upon the solid ground of their secluded country.

CHAPTER IV.

AMID THE UNKNOWN.

MR. ARCHBOLD RESTLING, or simple Archbold, as I should call him in the Oudemont mode, was among those first to greet me at the foot of the wall. A warm pressure of his hand, and the remark, "Malcolm, my young friend, we are not disappointed in you," prepared my general introduction to the company of men and women, boys and girls, who surrounded him. Then saying: "Our associate Jasper has set apart a room for your use," the said Jasper, whose surname was Bruce, stepped forward, took my hand and led me, followed by most of the folk, to a low, three-wheeled carriage, that stood at a little distance from the cliff. Bidding me step in and seat myself, he entered the vehicle and placed himself by my side. "A happy meeting soon, dear friends all," he said, and I echoed the parting salutation. A touch upon some lever or button, and our wagon sped away in an easterly direction over a roadbed so smooth that scarcely a jolt or jerk was perceptible. Fairly at my ease now, I realized, with almost a start, that there was no horse attached to the conveyance. The sun down, night was closing in fast, but roadside lamps burst into flame along the

way, lighting up the road with as clear but a softer radiance than that of our best gas lights at home. Jasper and I exchanged remarks now and then, but for the greater part of the hour that the ride continued I felt little disposition to converse; my mind was too busy with the remarkable series of experiences of the day; and Bruce recognizing my pre-occupation, delicately accorded it free course.

An excellent supper awaited us. I was hungry and never appreciated a meal more than that first one in the country that I had sought with so much concern and entered with such peculiar facilities. The food was novel, in most respects vegetarian, yet delightfully satisfying. I could not forbear asking questions about it that were smilingly answered by the host and the noble, motherly woman who had been presented as "Milline Bruce, my wife, Malcolm." After supper I was shown to the large room on the second floor that was to be my lodgement during my stay in Oudemon, and left to prepare for the inviting bed at my leisure. A small stand, similar to those used for gas with us, gave so bright a light from its insignificant little jet that I inspected it closely. It had a flattened base about four inches in diameter, containing not more than two or three ounces of fluid or whatever it was that produced the light. I learned later that it was liquefied gas, the same basicly as that employed to inflate the "aerolat" or garment for floatation in the air. This liquefied gas was mixed with chemical substances to pro-

duce variations of intensity for illumination, and also for use in the domestic routine of a family and for a great variety of industrial purposes, some of which may be mentioned later.

Before breakfast the next morning I rose early enough for a little saunter out of doors. The building, now my "hotel," so to speak, was an oblong square, say sixty feet by seventy, two stories in height, with an oval tower at one corner rising upward of forty feet. The ample dimensions provided for an inner court twenty-five by thirty-five feet, laid out in garden with two small buildings. In one of these was a deep cistern filled with clear, sparkling water. By its side, set upon a bronze platform, was a small machine pump with its system of pipes, showing that the house was served in this convenient way. As there were no indications of furnace or boiler, I inferred that the pumping engine was run by gas; the method of its operation was explained later and seemed remarkably ingenious, although the principle was simple enough; viz., that of the motive force obtained by the compression of gas. The house rooms of the first story had each a doorway to the court. Over the court a light framework of metal gracefully arched. This furnished support for a canvas covering that could be let down from the center on rainy days or when the midday sun of summer proved too severe. Surrounding the house at distances convenient for air and light were many trees and bushes, both ornamental and fruit-

bearing. Here and there a patch of flowering plants contrasted with the emerald of the thick sod. In the rear of the house, bordered by palm and laurel, was the vegetable garden, with its variety of comestible well known to my taste, and several plants of leaf and flower quite unknown to my experience. Beyond was the fruit garden, where tree, bush and vine offered a tempting display, associating products of the temperate North with the delicate growths of a tropical clime. Conveniently near were the buildings in which were kept the implements and machinery used for tilth and culture. Naturally, I looked for a stable or barn, with its inseparable bed or heap of stall refuse. There was none, for they have no horses in Oudemon. This surprised me, although the ride from the frontier in the self-propelling wagon might have prepared me for this modification of civilized usage.

Accustomed to the prospect offered by the rear courts of dwellings and the back lots of farm houses of my home civilization, my eyes were somewhat unprepared for the striking contrast presented by this "back yard" of the Bruce home. There were no heaps or patches of refuse, with here and there stray bits of discarded tinware or ineligible crockery; no scraps of exhausted news or book paper, no remnants of dress stuff or vestiges of long-neglected foot covering; no miscellaneous collection of worn and wasted articles from kitchen, dining room, or parlor; nothing, in fine, suggestive of slops and

troublesome waste. The same tidy, pleasant order ruled in the back grounds as in the front; and this was early found to be a general fashion with the folk I had dropped among, and not a special characteristic of the Bruce family.

Surrounding the house and its group of smaller erections was a park-like area of ground, great trees here and there lifting their tufted and spreading tops one hundred and fifty or more feet in air, and clustering shrubbery in the wide spaces modestly court-ing the friendship of the grasses. Through the open-ings I caught glimpses of other houses, apparently constructed on a similar plan to this of the Bruce family. There were no fences or hedgerows closely limiting or bounding the spaces, nothing to indicate division of property or specialty of ownership in land. Going out a little distance on what seemed to be the highway, I found it but twenty-five feet in width, a hard, smooth roadbed of gravel and schist, bordered with low growing plants and grass smoothly cut. Houses and buildings were com-monly constructed of a cement or fine concrete that hardened with age and showed little wear after many years of exposure. A tower that I often vis-ited had an elevation of three hundred feet, and was over fifty years old, yet showed not a crack or break in its massive wall.

I was still "looking around" when a low, gurgling sound drew my attention, and turning toward the quarter whence the sound proceeded I saw a one-

seat carriage, of four wheels, somewhat like our phaeton, rolling in my direction.

Two men were in it, and soon in one of them I recognized my friend the traveler. Stopping at my side, he sprang upon the ground.

"Well, Malcolm, out prospecting already? How does the land strike you?"

"Most delightfully, dear Mr. Restling. Its many surprises have made me feel as if I were in a wonderland."

"While among us, my good boy, will you not adopt our custom of address? Call me Archbold, as we shall call you Malcolm. I am much older than you, yet old and young are brothers and sisters. Our friend here is Irving of the Scott house, a few miles yonder. He is one of our councillors."

Offering my hand, I said: "Am pleased to know you, Irving, with so worthy a Scottish patronymic."

Laughing softly and giving me a lengthened grasp, he replied:

"Malcolm, there's something of the bonny Scot in you, too, if there's anything in the name. I have ridden over with Archbold to welcome you and to say that our Committee will meet for its weekly session to-morrow at mid-forenoon—not much to do, Archbold, as you know. All are desirous to see our visitor."

"I shall come, of course, Mr.—Irving."

At this juncture I felt a slight pull on my coat skirt, and looking down saw a monkey, perhaps two

feet and a half high, grinning at me and pointing toward the house.

“One of our much-used house attendants,” said Restling. “He’s a howler; you have heard of the species? Among us they are trained to do many little services. He announces that breakfast is ready. We will go in with you.”

On our turning toward the house the monkey gave a small, squeaky cry, and ran away. Whether or not Archbold and Irving were expected to sit at table with us, they made part of the company that partook of the toothsome and abundant meal, only remarking as they entered the room where the Bruce family were waiting: “A happy meeting, dear friends,” which was responded to in the same cordial spirit Milline pointing them to two places that had been made ready at the ample table.

Besides mine host and hostess this Bruce family included a grown-up son, Willis, a daughter Stella, about midway in her teens, a younger brother of Jasper, as yet unmarried, and a young woman from a neighboring district who assisted in the duties of the house. There were chairs for all at the table, no kitchen maid or waiter succeeding us for a second meal. I soon learned that perfect equality subsisted among these people, no distinction being made in the domestic régime or in social relations. The idea of class subordination, of one being inferior to another, seemed to have been lost from their economics. Two monkeys also belonged to the

house equipment—lively, amusing little fellows, but well behaved for monkeys, and showing themselves useful and trustworthy servants in many respects; some I met with in my visits at other homes were so well trained and intelligent that it seemed they needed ability to speak only to complete their accomplishments.

Jasper placed one of his at my disposal, and after a short interval for becoming acquainted with each other I found Jabber, as he was named, a very amiable and helpful valet, running on errands, carrying messages, and even helping to dress. Besides, on my rambles into the country, when I took him along, he amused me by his mischievous yet always good-natured antics

MY FIRST OUTING.

After breakfast Restling carried me away in his autolat, as the people termed their self-running wagons—many also styled it a “goalone,” especially the young folks. The power to run the wheels was furnished by a little engine actuated by the gas of which mention has been made. No fire was required, only the energy of compression, the gas being stored in small cylinders of metal sheets remarkably thin, yet of great strength. These cylinders, as applied in the propulsion of ordinary light wagons, were but three inches in diameter and ten inches in length, and held safely gas whose volume when free

would exceed 2,500 cubic feet. Yet the tremendous force thus stored up in the cylinder was so nicely adjusted by a valve that a child could operate the machinery after a few lessons. I had taken but a few rides when I found myself a fair "driver." It was not customary to run at high speed, except in emergent cases—rare enough in Oudemon, yet I am sure that I could have obtained a rate of fifty miles an hour with the vehicle put at my disposal. The merest turn of the graduated key set me off, and five degrees of variation developed a speed of ten miles. The general character of the country being level naturally or made so by the improving hands of this industrious little nation, the use of the auto-lat rendered it easy to compass long distances in the course of a day.

In Archbold's company a considerable tour was made that first morning, and my eyes and ears absorbed much of detail relating to landscape and people. From him I learned that the settlements covered about nine thousand square miles which for the most part had been transformed into a great park and garden. One's view in every direction took in trees, shrubbery, houses, gardens and meadow openings. Did he ascend to the roof of one of the towers that stood in every district, and which rise to a height of two hundred feet and more, he obtained a good view, or glimpse, on a fair day, of mountain ridges that eastward, northward and southward as well as westward, hem in Oudemon. An early

morning prospect from one of these towers was grandly beautiful, challenging description. The play of slanting sunbeams over and through the rich vegetation with its remarkable variety of large and small growths—products of care and culture seen in no other land to such perfection in leaf, flower and fruit, was enchanting beyond expression to an esthetic nature. Here and there bright, silvery gems of lake and river heightened the effect of the foliage greens and browns, and cropping up at intervals amid their leafy environment the roofs and upper stories of houses in gray, white, brown and blue, added man's neat and graceful handiwork to the charming creations of the Divine Master Builder.

I had read of the Brazil country, its soft climatic conditions and profuse vegetation, but was not prepared for the delightful effects that commanded my notice on this first outing with Restling. The season in that sub-equatorial region was advanced spring; vegetation was in the fullness of leaf and flower, the air was balmy, yet exhilarating in its freshness and purity; the sky almost cloudless, such gossamer masses as were visible intensifying the deep blue. Commenting on the order and beauty of garden, field and wood, as the rare physiognomy of the roadside presented itself to my eyes, I could not but express much surprise at the degree of perfection that had been attained. My companion remarked :

“Remembering that our people have been in this region over a hundred years, it is not so wonderful that their industry has made changes in the appearance of the landscape. You will see, ere long, that we have certain methods or habits in regard to matters agricultural that tend to maintain the neatness and order you so appreciate. In a sense, so far as interest in farm and garden is concerned, we are all farmers, everybody old enough doing something for the growth—trees, plants or what not—according to their taste and leisure.”

“May I ask, Archbold, the extent of your population?”

“Certainly, Malcolm. According to our lastest registration there are 482,674 of us. Last evening our statistician, Boyle Kingsley, whom I met on the way to the western ridge, informed me that a boy had been born in the thirty-fourth district, about seventy-five miles from here, which adds one more to the number.”

“You do not increase rapidly, then?”

“No, not as your economists may reckon growth in numbers; yet our increase has been steady the past forty years. This has proved a very healthful climate, especially for our children. When you visit our mausoleum, you will see that very few children of tender age are inscribed upon the tablets. As soon as our people became acclimated—no, I should scarcely say that—but that as soon as they learned to live wisely here they found that health was the

rule, and many things in the Brazilian climate that settlers in other parts of this continent consider pernicious were really not so, or could be modified so much as not to affect us unfavorably. We have living among us a few of the early settlers, men and women, who came in before the great upheaval. These must be a hundred years old, some older; yet, with but one or two exceptions, they are able to be of use to themselves and others."

I visited several of these ancients, as opportunity offered, and found them very interesting folk. With memory fairly good, they could recite many incidents in the early history of the colony, and emphasized by their own participation in it the remarkable development of the country and people. As Restling had said, the man chiefly instrumental in organizing the original colony was a Scotchman with "peculiar" views, social and religious. A mixed class of persons joined him, mainly from the rural districts, among them a good proportion of New Englanders, fairly educated, whose influence became predominant in the new country. The Scotchman lived long enough to see his ideas engrafted firmly on the life of the growing community. Among people of fairly rational minds it was to be expected that a system of *modus vivendi* that promoted general improvement and individual happiness would be accepted. Albeit a Nordau might interpose the objection that "the natural perversity" or "tendency to degeneration" of human nature would be likely to

neutralize the endeavor of a few exceptionally constituted souls to better the lot of all. Oudemont, however, illustrated the happy normal side of things human, and demonstrated the effect of a good beginning, and the influence of manners and habits of a healthful type upon people of average mental constitution.

CHAPTER V.

AN UNOFFICIAL BODY.

My host, Bruce, accompanied me to the meeting of the council, and on the way described some of the methods in practice for managing such public affairs as required the attention of persons of intelligence and judgment above the average, who exercised their functions by the title of respect accorded to their wisdom rather than by any special appointment. The simplicity of detail that characterized affairs usually termed civil would have confounded a Boston or Chicago politician, while the perfection of result would have delighted a disciple of Henry George.

“The council is composed of our older men and a few women,” said Bruce, “who serve voluntarily, or rather because of their love for the community. Every matter of interest, if there is any controversy, comes to them for adjustment, and their decision or opinion is final. Sometimes a vote or tally of voices is called, for the sake of a definite expression, but that is rarely done.”

“Rarely done, Jasper? Why, then, your proceedings are not quite parliamentary!” I exclaimed.

“Perhaps not, in your sense, Malcolm, yet our

council deliberates with much earnestness sometimes, for it does occur when a grave matter demands careful consideration. Even the application of our Royal Law may not be perfectly clear, and a vote will be expedient. Usually the proper course becomes obvious enough and opinion is unanimous."

"Who is your president or governor, Jasper?" I asked, somewhat perversely, it should be confessed.

"We have no such officer, or civil head such as your civilization or economics recognizes."

"No—well, how, then, is your government carried on?"

"We have no system at all analogous to what you are accustomed to, Malcolm. Our council is the only body that possesses anything like a recognized authority or power of decision. Perhaps it might be termed by your statesmen a mere board of reference, existing by the courtesy of the populace."

"Well, this is the most extraordinary feature—Mr. Br-r—my good sir, most unprecedented in all my observation. Archbold intimated something of the kind when I met him in my own city; but, then, in my incredulity, I was inclined to think that he was chaffing me, as we say. No real system of government! A mere semblance of authority! Why, you must be pure Communists or Anarchists, or something approximate!"

"As you please, my young friend of possible political aspirations," he returned, in great good humor.

"No, I have none," I cried. "As affairs are conducted at home there is little charm in politics for me. But tell me, please, how, in the name of order and justice, do you manage? What you have already said does not clear my vision quite."

Bruce smiled at my astonishment and insistence. "We have something in the way of law or precept or standard of action, certainly, if we lack a fixed government according to your idea. Our Royal Law is early stamped in the head and heart of every child born among us, and its meaning is taught and illustrated with the primary training of home and school."

"And what is this marvelous Royal Law that operates so effectually on morals and manners? I would learn it myself."

"Simple enough, Malcolm; to the willing learner very simple. You will probably see occasions for its application while here, and by illustration comprehend its nature more thoroughly than it were possible by mere definitions or formulas."

At the council meeting there were present but fourteen of the thirty-nine members, or district representatives, five of them women. Rarely have I seen a company of as noble-appearing people. All were tall and well proportioned and exhibiting every sign of robust health. The women were attired in garments of inconspicuous yet graceful pattern, well fitting, yet modestly cut, and short enough in the skirt to permit easy, unhampered movement. There

was no affectation of show or ornamentation, only a contrast of color in trimming to relieve what might otherwise appear extremely plain, and a ribbon in the abundant hair or at the waist. I have said "extremely plain," when it should be said that the material of which their garments were fashioned was of a texture and quality that in each case, although neutral, rather, in dye, would have invited the admiration of a connoisseur in dress goods, because of its fineness and adaptation to the service required. On our arrival the unanimous outburst of "Happy meetings" was somewhat embarrassing from persons whose first acquaintance impressed me so strongly, yet after a few minutes I felt quite at ease, although my respect for them increased with familiarity.

UNDER INSPECTION—A NOVEL TEST.

"Perhaps our friend from the North will not object to our Temperament test," remarked one of the women.

"Why, no, if it is not a thing that bites," I replied.

A low ripple of laughter went around, and the oldest man, in appearance, of the assembly, to whom much deference was shown, said: "Let it be tried; we do not chance upon a foreign example often, friends, and our Malcolm, I think, will prove a promising case. Caroline, for your trial."

Caroline produced from a closet several sheets of a glossy, translucent tissue and a bottle. Coming, then, to me she offered one of the sheets, saying: "Malcolm, may I ask you to breathe two or three times upon this?"

Taking the sheet and holding it closely to my lips, I breathed upon it three times. Quickly seizing the sheet, the lady councillor poured a few drops from the bottle upon it, and holding it horizontally waited for results, all the others meanwhile being as attentive. Gradually there appeared a light blue tinge over the surface, with radial streaks of yellow and brown that deepened toward the edges.

"It is well," said Marcus, the senior of the gathering. "Our impression is confirmed. Jasper, will you make a trial, too, that Malcolm may see the effect in your case?"

My host at once took a sheet and breathed upon it, Caroline applying the solution. A rich gold color was evolved, in which a few faint lines of green were visible.

"Jasper has gained, brothers, think you so, since the last trial?"

A cordial response of "Yes," "Very evident," "As we might expect," broke from the company, while a smile of great sweetness rested upon the features of Bruce. Of course my face betrayed my curiosity regarding this strange procedure, and I had not long to wait for an explanation.

"That you may know what this test means, Mal-

colm," the elder now added, "I should advise you that our students of nature, especially human nature, of whom our Caroline is a most zealous one, have determined a relationship between chemistry and the vital excretions, which affords an estimate of the average mental state of an individual. The changes wrought by this peculiar solution when in contact with the products of expiration show the dominant traits or feeling in the character, whether good or ill. Thus we have brought out whether an excitable, angry, envious disposition, or a kind, generous, broad, cheerful, hopeful nature rules in the thought and conduct. Your sheet there shows that your feeling toward the world is in the main a calm and reasonable one, based upon not a little experience. The general blue shading indicates that you are cool and even-tempered, not inclined to make trouble or engage in quarrel; a man of peace in most circumstances; yet, if we must believe the brown tints, you have inherited elements of temper that, under great provocation, may exhibit an energy that will overcome almost any obstacle—an earnest warmth of feeling that it would not be well for a foe to challenge. The yellow lines show that your view of matters is cheerful, as a rule; you do not worry much over failure or mischances. Toward those who show an interest in you, and are affectionate and tender, you respond to a degree, but are not often known to take the initiative in expressing emotion of an ardent character, unless occasion of an unusual

sort awakens the undercurrent of temper to which I referred a moment ago. Thus the breath leaf—Caroline our skilled inspector may point out further characteristics, if you wish, Malcolm.”

“Quite enough for the present, worthy sir and friend,” I answered. “A very kind portrait and, as I see myself, quite true to my virtues. With so pronounced a chemical basis the method equals that of most of the professional character readers I have met.”

“Yes, Malcolm,” said Caroline, “this is a scientific procedure that offers to your own examination its clear evidence. You may obtain the reaction in any case, and study its markings at your leisure as you would a photographic negative, according to a formulæry taught in our treatises on psychological chemistry. Consider the leaf of our brother, Bruce. You notice the rich tone of the color; that shows a warm, loving nature dominant in him: always generous and hopeful, and unselfish to a marked degree——”

“But the green lines, Caroline?” interrupted my host.

“The green lines are weakening; quite less conspicuous than in the last, I am sure. Jasper is not so personal in his aims; the old family peculiarity of ambition that led its members to desire special respect and preference among men—in a word, pride of race and a jealousy toward others who might obtain more notice—has lost most of its strength in his disposition.”

“Admirable chemistry, friends, indeed; a moral monitor! I infer that you are in the habit of making this test to learn whether or not there are changes in one’s nature.”

“Yes, especially in the cases of our children and young people; it supplies a trusty criterion for their training and guidance. In our educational houses we follow a regular course in employing it; the sheets are numbered and filed for reference, and serve as records of mental growth and character formation.”

“My associates of the council,” added Marcus, “will agree with me that nothing else that has been introduced into our practical life, within the generation, has done so much toward the moral improvement of our people as this comparatively simple device of our chemists. The fact that the breath will show almost what a person is thinking of has actually been the impelling cause to the reform of some of us who appeared to be falling back into the old, perverse habits of our ancestors. Let us now to duty.”

Then ensued the consideration of several matters that had been registered in a special book by one of the number, who acted as a secretary would at one of our meetings. There were questions regarding the roads, the management of a certain school, the improvement of a water course, the excavation of a mining tunnel, the propriety of certain experiments with chemicals that were dangerous to their manip-

ulators, the care of an aged man who was widowed and had no children or relatives, and finally the selection of some one to perform service of a responsible nature in a distant section of Oudemon. Regarding the old man, who had become too infirm to labor for his own maintenance, it became the duty of the council to name the family that should provide a home for him, a dozen places in his district having been offered. The only item of gravity was the last. As reported by the secretary, certain signs had been received from thirty-four, reflecting unhappily on the recent conduct of one who occupied a quasi-public relation to the people of his district.

“Caroline will show us the last sheet taken from the brother,” said the elder councillor.

The lady associate opened a portfolio that had been lying on the table, and drew out one of the character tests. It was numbered 786-34 in one corner. On holding it up to the light there was revealed a hazy yellow field, with strong purplish lines running in irregular curves. An expression of serious concern marked the faces of all present.

“Show us the previous number, sister.”

She drew out another sheet, numbered 785-34 and held it up by the side of the first. There was a similar yellow field, but the dark lines were less distinct.

“Foster is a sick man, we regret to see. His malady is growing upon him. Brothers of the council, what think you should be done?”

All were silent; then Restling spoke: “We are sorry, dear friends, for this brother, but shall we go to the extent of asking him to withdraw from work he has undertaken? He is able and skilful, and a while since the district was entirely content. Would it not be wise for us to send one to him who will apprise him of our sorrow at the change that has come upon him? Will not he recognize the power of the Royal Law and yield to its admonition? I think he will.”

“Well spoken,” said Marcus. “Have any others of our company a word to say?”

Several spoke to the effect that the suggestion of Archbold was appropriate, and they knew no better course.

“Well, then, Walter, as you live in the neighbouring district, will you see Foster? Convey our loving regard to him, and assure him of our confidence in his ability to overcome the weakness that has affected his spirit. You know well how to express the mind of the Great Master, and I little doubt that the word in season will set him right.”

“Certainly, my dear elder,” replied the one addressed, “I shall be pleased to undertake this mission.”

Hereupon the meeting ended, and after a general handshaking and exchanges of parting wishes the councillors separated in the open space before the entrance of the assembly hall. Those who lived at a distance rode away on their goalones, while a few departed on foot.

Returning with Bruce, I asked many questions that were suggested by the proceedings to which I had listened. Finally I ventured:

“What is the nature of the trouble in the case of Foster? I could not gather it from the remarks made in the meeting.”

“These things, Malcolm, are not freely discussed by us, in detail. It is sufficient to know their bearing and effect, especially upon the person himself. Our rule is to say as little as possible of things that are discreditable in the conduct of one.”

“To his faults a little blind, eh, Jasper?”

“Yes, that’s it, in a good measure. So, too, we do not wait until one is dead before we speak well of him or her. But some explanation of Foster’s case is due to you. He has been showing a disposition to misrepresent in certain of his dealings. His plate disclosed a spirit having a tendency to covetousness and over-selfishness, I regret to say, and in the exchanges of his department there have been instances of personal unfairness that have caused protest on the part of people concerned, but to which he has given little regard.”

“Marcus termed it a sort of sickness, did he not?”

“Yes, a mental sickness, that may become worse if not treated promptly.”

“You Oudemonites seem to look upon that chemical breath test as quite infallible, Jasper?”

“And with reason, my dear skeptic, of Northern notions, for it has been in use with us for many years, and its truth demonstrated in every case with an accurate solution. It holds the mirror up to nature. You may travel all through our country and not find a single grown-up man or woman who doubts its virtue. Of course I except the few people of unsound mind among us.”

“You have, then, some crazy ones?”

“Yes, a very few such unfortunates. The man who seriously discredits the breath test we consider mentally unsound, or dishonest, which is much the same in effect.”

“By that standard, Jasper, I fear that your council board would adjudge most of us Northerners in the category of the daft. But what do you with your insane?”

“The very few we have are cared for by their district. We have no fixed place, no asylum, such as yours. Usually their relatives maintain them or families in succession take turns in keeping them, so that the burden is distributed. It is a voluntary service, however, and not regarded as a hardship to provide for the unfortunate victim of mind loss.”

“Then your demented cannot be violent.”

“No, our habits are such that the so-called stron-

ger, or passional faculties, are not aroused to that stage which becomes excitement and turbulence on occasion. It must be expected that some of our very old folk will show feebleness of sense as well as weakness of muscle; but it will surprise you to see men and women among us bordering upon a hundred years who are not yet altogether unable to be of service in some respect. Our elderly people are our pride."

"Then you do admit, Jasper, one of the sentiments that 'puffeth up,' according to the Episcopal liturgy," I interposed, laughingly.

"Such a man, for instance, as our Councillor Marcus."

"Oh, I confess that your pride in him is laudable; but how old is he, pray?"

"Marcus was born in the year 1765 at Great Barrington, Mass."

"Not possible, Jasper. I should not take him to be over seventy-five at the most. There is not the slightest intimation of decline in his mental fiber. Certainly a rare mind. I must see others of your patriarchs after this Nestor."

COMMUNISM OF LABOR.

On our road we passed a group of boys and girls engaged with rakes, hoes and other implements in improving the condition of the pavement and side paths. They were evidently enjoying the work, and

doing it with so much zest that I asked Bruce to stop and permit me to have a little chat with them. Going on, he said: "Our children, old and young, but strong enough, have an active share, you see, in our community. That is a detail from one of the schools of this district. Every day, at a certain hour, so many are designated for this service—to do light duty on the roads. There is a sort of road commission in every district that attends to the general matter of road making and the heavier work; but after a road has been constructed by men, the children have little trouble to keep it in fair order. Our wagons are not heavy, and we have no horses to stamp holes in them, and even in our rainy season there does not come often so severe a downpour as to wash them out. Over there you can see, Malcolm, one of our veterans trimming a hedge of laurel.

"Yes."

"He is one of our oldest, yet an excellent gardener and able to perform a morning's work."

The aged man was whistling cheerily as he plied the shears; and when we passed near enough to attract his attention he waved a hand in salutation.

"Your community or country, Jasper," I said, in continuance of the conversation, "has about four hundred and fifty or four hundred and sixty thousand, the development of little over a century, as I am informed. Such a growth seems remarkable from so small a beginning as yours was. Your

families must average a larger number of children than ours for such a result."

"Like all new colonies, my young economist, our families were larger in the early years of the settlement, but now the average does not exceed three children. But we are a marrying people, believing earnestly in wedlock and domestic life as fundamental to a well-ordered social polity, and contributing to the best individual and community welfare. When our young folks attain full maturity of body and mind, we do not hurry their development as your social practices do—they expect to form alliances for life, and do so, with few exceptions. On this topic of our domestic relations, I should prefer, Malcolm, that you would confer with some of our women. They will be glad, I know, to tender you all the information you would ask. They do not affect prudishness, and have no finical notions of shame-facedness that interfere with duty and humanity. From childhood they are instructed in every propriety and need of their organisms; and so are the boys in regard to themselves. Little difference is made in the general education of our boys and girls. We believe with the philosopher, Emerson, that 'the virtues are natural to us and not a painful acquisition;' and by the early inculcation of proper habits, and the influence of healthful example our children, as a rule, grow up in love of truth, order and purity. You will see among them an unconscious innocence of evil thought, and yet, because

of careful instruction by parent and teacher, they are wise about things your people keep from their young children lest they should be corrupted by adopting vicious habits. Our teachers believe that the way to make good men and women is to establish good habits in children as early as may be, and that it is more in agreement with human nature for children to obey normal, healthful instincts than do what is harmful and improper. If they have no corrupt teaching, no bad examples set them by associates, they are likely to act spontaneously in accordance with what is right and pure. Their motives will be innocent of moral perversion, at any rate, and their conduct need only the guidance of the experienced parent or teacher to become habitually impressed with good intentions."

I had listened closely to this discourse which the excellent man set forth with an earnestness of manner that compelled respect, but here interrupted him:

"All this, Jasper, is exceedingly interesting to me, and I am not inclined to express any personal objection; but some of our doctrinarians in psychology would try to indicate certain fallacies in your statement, on the score of parental impression, or what is termed the persistence of acquired habit. They are not all agreed, however, on this point, by any means. From my own observations, not very extensive, it must be admitted, I am inclined to think that your views are well founded. Nature with us Northerners does not have a fair chance in

the development of children ; they are hedged in, especially as regards our city life, with too many artificial limitations ; I cannot help rejoicing in the happy successes of your methods."

We were now entering the grounds of my host ; Stella was upon the broad veranda and ran out to us, giving one hand to her father and the other to me as we alighted.

"Dinner is all ready, father Bruce and cousin Malcolm," she cried ; "come right in."

So it would appear that I had been already adopted into relationship with the Oudemonites. We followed the girl in, and sat down to the inviting repast.

CHAPTER VI.

AN EXCURSION WITH THE YOUNG FOLKS.

My four-pawed valet brought me a slip of paper on which was written: "Perhaps our friend Malcolm would like to go with a party of us young folks up to Lake Dorad this afternoon, at two of his time, fourteen of ours. If so, will he be at the great tulip tree then? Willis is going, and mother. Stella."

Fourteen hours (o'clock) found me at the tree designated, in the midst of a company of lively young people. I was armed, like most of the others, with a light, steel-pointed rod about three feet long; at least, the metal looked like steel well polished. Some had covered kettles of bright metal, also. We set off on foot, pursuing a northeasterly direction, and after a tramp of nearly four miles, most agreeably varied by the merry talk and song of the girls and boys, we arrived at the beautiful sheet of water, the bottom of which shone with a yellowish sand and suggested its name. There were small boats lying inshore, and I assumed that the pointed rods we carried were for fishing purposes. But no; plunging into a belt of forest, their use became very soon manifest. One of the boys beckoned to me and cried: "Malcolm, I will show you how." I followed him

to a tall tree with a thick, soft-looking bark and broad, fleshy leaves of great length. Scratching the bark cross-wise with the point, a milk-like sap soon began to ooze out. Taking my rod he drove it into the stem a little above the scratches and then hung his kettle so that it would catch the falling sap. In a few minutes the exudation had increased to a little stream.

“Tree milk, Malcolm; it is becoming best now. Later it is thicker, but makes good jelly and gum. Try it, if you please,” handing me a spoon. The taste was pleasant, much like goat’s milk but thicker in consistency, would bear thinning with water to double the quantity, and be an excellent accompaniment for bread and cakes; its nutritive value appeared to be higher than our cow’s milk. Leaving “my tree,” I joined others in the quest of the macaruba, as they called it; and when all the pails were in place we took to the boats and paddled on the transparent water. In the golden depths many fishes were visible, darting to and fro or lazily suspended in mid-element. They did not appear to be timid or disturbed by our presence, but moved about in evident unconcern, displaying their graceful forms to advantage in the sunshine. The lake was a favorite resort for the people of the neighboring districts. In the woodland surrounding it there were numerous pavilions and benches, and the ground surface, clear of underbrush, was carpeted with a thick, low-growing sod. Here and there, along the margin of

the water, graceful palms swept low, and laurels and crotons lent their variety to beautify the scene. Hundreds of birds sprang about in the branches, twittering and singing in every key. They, too, like the fishes, betrayed no fear of us, and gave abundant opportunity to study their plumage and form. Allured by the beauty of the grove, I strolled off by myself, culling here and there a flower, studying for a little a tree or plant new and strange, or listening to the notes of a bird in a neighboring bush.

The innocent naturalness of these young folks had an unexpected illustration here; for while sauntering about I chanced upon a little maid of ten or eleven years readjusting her hose, which had slipped from its attachment. My appearance did not even startle her. Looking up smilingly, she continued pulling at the disorderly stocking, with her light skirt drawn high up about her waist, and the white, rounded limb in full exposure. Of course, I smiled, in response to her, and passed on, the incident suggesting some reflections upon the beautiful confidence shown by a pure young heart in a stranger; and yet in the light of what Bruce had told me of their mode of training and habits the girl's conduct was only what was to be expected. She had withdrawn from her young associates to correct the disorderly part of her dress, a proper act and prompted by her judgment. Toward me, who had chanced upon her retreat in the midst of "putting herself to

rights," she doubtless felt for the moment as if in the presence of her father.

IN NATURE'S WALKS.

Outside the circle of woodland I noted cultivated tracts extending radially, not arranged in the formal geometric manner of our fruit and grain fields, but broken with groups of trees and parterres of flowering plants and trellises of vine. There were numerous brooks running to and from the lake, with light bridges of the rustic sort, in many cases so enmeshed with vines that the framework was shrouded from view. Here were fruit palms, fig trees, banana circles, laurel pears, the custard apple, cherries, guava nut, vanilla and cinnamon shrubs, with their variety of foliage, besides myrtle, cactus and water plants laden with bloom, and breathing around rich perfume. Several patches of magueys enlisted close attention, so large were they; the great, flowering stems promising a later maturity of remarkable richness. This Dorado park seemed to me an ideal realized of what a small park should be, beautiful in its arrangement and useful in many ways far beyond any public ground or garden I had seen in my own or foreign countries. Every section or district in Oudemont had such a park, which served not only as a place of semi-wild recreation for the people, but as a field for horticultural and arboreal experiment.

Stella, Willis and mother Bruce, or Milline, as I should say, gave me not a little data regarding the

trees, plants and vines, being highly pleased by my enthusiastic interest. One crescentic bed of a shrubby growth that reminded me of the coffee plants I had seen on my route through Peru, they told me, produced the berry of which their common breakfast drink was prepared. It was an improved species of coffee, not unlike the coffee of our Northern tables in appearance; but it had no narcotic element, was a pleasant, exhilarating beverage with a delightful aromatic flavor. In combination with the wheat biscuit, corn muffins, bread fruit, guava or fig sauce usually on the table this made the morning repast all that I desired. The variety of vegetable, nut and fruit products, as spread in these experimental beds, seemed unlimited.

"I do not wonder that you Oudemonians are not given to flesh eating," was my remark as my eyes glanced over these prolific fields. "You are so richly supplied with the most nutritive of food material that animal stuff must seem not only unnecessary but poor in comparison."

"Yes," said Milline, "very few of us have a disposition to touch animal food. There are some who still harbor the old hunting spirit of their Scottish or Canadian ancestors; they indulge it by catching fish occasionally and eating them. Some of us, too, have a fancy for fowls, mainly for their eggs. But I believe that in another generation there will scarcely be found one in our country whose practice will not be essentially that of the vegetarian."

"If I should live with you, Milline, be sure that my carnivorous instinct would shrivel up in a month or two, and I should become one of your most devoted plant eaters."

I was permitted, nay encouraged, to pluck such flowers as struck my fancy, and I made up a considerable bunch of orange and shell flowers, mingling them for color with two or three species of pink, blue and crimson geraniums that I had never before seen. My example was imitated by many of the young people, and the care and taste they exhibited in taking the blossoms from the plants elicited my open approval. There was no reckless tramping upon the neatly raked beds, or rough tearing from the stem the specimens desired. My complimentary reference to their discretion, however, seemed lost upon them.

One of the party blew a soft, flute-like note three or four times—evidently a signal—and Willis said:

"Mother Milline, it is time to set about returning. I was just thinking that it must be nearly seventeen hours. You see the sun is dropping on the ridge."

We went to our macarubas and found the pails nearly full. After taking down the scratchers a little pressure with their smooth butts against the soft bark quite closed the cuts and stopped the flowing juice. So, laden with the spoil of our outing, we returned a merry, jocund group, to our different homes.

CHAPTER VII.

A CHARMING ACQUAINTANCE.

WHILE dressing next morning I heard voices in the court below, and glancing through a window saw a tall and graceful young woman in lively chat with Stella and Willis. The latter looked up and caught me still at my window, and called: "Come down, Malcolm, soon; I think you will like to know our Ellice. She is waiting to see you." Quickly looking up, the visitor saw me there tying my neck scarf, and smiled. The window was wide open, and being low my *déshabillé* of trousers and *négligé* shirt was visible in part. I had, in fact, adopted for the most the dress of the men around me, as best suited to the mellow climate, and comfort and vanity aside, I was quite convinced, after a little trial and the approval of Stella, that my personal appearance suffered no deterioration by the comfortable change. Finishing my dressing in a few minutes, I went down into the court.

"I am right glad to meet you, Malcolm," said the newcomer, and I responded: "Thanking you, Mlle. Ellice, I heartily say 'A happy meeting.' "

At the breakfast table Bruce remarked:

"I learn from our folks, Malcolm, that you are fond of flowers, plants, and so on?"

“Certainly I am, mine host much respected, although there has been little time at home for their cultivation. To have a conservatory at some time has been one of my ambitions. But since I have seen what you have of garden and park my hopes have sunk, for anything like the enchanting specimens here would be the despair of our florists.”

“Very complimentary to those of Oudemon; yet with our climate and soil we should do well. I was going to say that our Ellice is quite a scholar in the botany of the country; she has explored a good part of it herself, and prepared a large herbarium which it would please you to see.”

The young woman thus mentioned added: “If you will come to our house this afternoon, Malcolm, I will show you my preparations. In the morning I am at the school.”

I bowed my acknowledgments with “Certainly, I should be delighted.”

“Ellice teaches the nature and uses of plants and vegetables to the children,” said mother Bruce.

“I infer that you include their food values, and also their applications in a medicinal sense, Madam Bruce. By the way, I suppose you have lady doctors as well as ourselves?”

Milline looked at me almost benevolently. “Well, Malcolm, we have not much use for doctors, as you know them. Our people live so naturally——”

“And intelligently,” I interrupted with a deprecating gesture.

“—As you please, my good boy—that we do not require the attention of one highly skilled in so called medical remedies often. Our families generally know the virtues of those plants considered valuable in sickness, and such little ailments as may affect us are easily managed. But we have chemists and earnest students who are well informed on many points of the physician’s business, and in accidents of a serious nature, or emergencies, when they occur, we apply to them.”

“Then accidents are rare among you? Your simple, regular ways, your entire lack of the rush and whirl of advanced civilization, no railways gridironing your fields and roads, no runaway horses or surly dogs, no uncertain-tempered men with opportunities to become frenzied with poisonous drinks, no steam pipes in your walls to burst and mangle your bodies, no electric maze of wire to threaten you with sudden death or life-long paralysis. What a blessed absence of risk to life and limb! But accidents occur in the best-regulated society, after all; what then, let me insist, dear hostess?”

“Yes, it was about two years ago, was it not, husband Jasper, that Leslie Scott was injured by the falling of a stone when they were building the tower in district eighteen?”

“Yes; an oversight on his part in leveling. The stone fell from the wall and fractured his knee. He has carried a stiff joint ever since. Accidents, however, as our Milline tells you, Malcolm, are rare, and

by reason of our uncomplicated life and deliberate habits. I suppose that you would be disposed to nudge our would-be doctors and surgeons on the score of lacking practice, but they study your treatises and try to be ready for the unexpected."

"And I've no doubt they are as successful in their treatment of the unexpected as our doctors are."

Turning to my newest acquaintance, I said :

"Mlle. Preceptor, I shall be at your house this afternoon at the fourteenth, fifteenth or sixteenth hour, as you may name."

"Let me call for you as I pass, Monsieur Malcolm?"

Nearly three delightful hours were spent with the young botanist. Claiming no skill in such a line, I knew enough regarding flowers to appreciate her sprightly description of the many species in her collection, and in answer to questions regarding plants like the rose, gladiolus, caladium, begonia, chrysanthemum, as grown in the North, found myself able to give her points she desired to obtain. At the end I took supper with the Denton family. It was a goodly tableful—ten persons, old and young, and all related. Ellice was the third in order of five children, four of whom were yet at home; a brother two years older, married but a few years, was living in the family of his father-in-law, as was the common practice, until circumstances favored the establishment of an independent abode. Percy Denton, younger by three years than Ellice, interested me

with some account of the family relations of the district and the social usages. In a gentle, bantering vein he referred to his sister's spinsterhood as a condition not so much of her own particular choice as "one of uncertainty, after the manner of classic Penelope." We all laughed merrily, Ellice joining, with a cheek flushing slightly. Taking up the brother's allusion, I ventured:

"May not the young lady's dilemma be that of the filial Antigone, rather than that of the perplexed semi-widow of the Trojan warrior?" and was rewarded by a sweet smile from the girl.

"Daughter is old enough, if I remember her age," observed Denton senior, "but I'm half disposed to think there's some fairy prince in the woods she meets when out on her supposed collecting excursions."

"Yes, dear father mine," returned the girl, in the same humor, "don't be at all surprised when I bring him home some day." Looking at me as she said this, her lively features aglow with the frank expression of hearty, complete womanhood, I could not but confess to a thrill of pleasure quite unusual. Symmetrical and full in development, clear and fresh in complexion, with large brown eyes under a fringe of rich brown lashes, a wealth of soft wavy hair in which there was just enough of auburn to imprint a glow, and full red lips that suggested a readiness of response to tenderness and affection, Ellice was indeed a charming type of the perfect

woman, every way desirable for the wife and companion of a noble, cultured man. Such reflections coursed unbidden in my mind, and were probably expressed in the prolonged gaze that I could not help, for a smile parted her lips, revealing the perfect teeth, and her eyes dropped as if to consider the marmalade and biscuit upon the plate before her.

CHAPTER VIII.

A PRACTICAL EXAMPLE OF DOMESTIC MEDICINE.

THE good fellowship existing among the children of Oudemon was not lost with their growth into maturity. Encouraged to believe in equality of right and privilege in tender years, both sexes advanced toward manhood and womanhood with feeling and convictions of mutual sincerity and respect. The women were robust and vigorous in body, as similar opportunity was given for their education and culture physically, and their natural readiness made them very nearly the peers of the men intellectually.

The father of a family was recognized as its natural head, yet so much deference was given the mother that it was difficult for me to decide whose opinion was really paramount. There was no bald exhibition of authority or mastership in administering home affairs; sympathy, affection, forbearance seemed the ever-present influences and characterized the policy or usage generally observed in the affairs of the community at large. Indeed, it appeared to me that the aggregate population expressed, with an emphasis, the prevailing sentiment of the family. At first I took it for granted that

these people in my presence were “on their good behavior,” and things were too nice to last, but it soon became apparent that their conduct was the natural outcome of established habit, the unaffected obedience to normal sentiments that were ingrown with their development. I was witness to discussions where opinions differed and warmth of manner was displayed; yet the majesty of their “Royal Law” overruled the exhibition of temper. In the council, as Bruce had said, a vote upon any matter or “show of hands” was rare, but if it were taken the minority at once consented to the result, as the wiser course.

“We try to do the best with what light we have,” ventured Marcus to me at the close of a meeting when more than usual feeling had been manifested by one or two members, “but human nature in its best estate is human, you know, Malcolm, and mistakes are made.”

“What, then, my venerable friend?”

“We set about correcting them as far as possible. Just as the operation of a bad law will instruct your legislators in regard to what is required, so we can learn from our mistakes what could scarcely be obtained in any other way.”

The hearty, generous naturalness of these people was illustrated at times in a way that proved a little embarrassing to a man with Northern notions of etiquette. Although possessing a good constitution, I had a rather sensitive stomach, which sometimes gave me not a little pain. The change of diet ex-

perienced on entering Oudemon and embracing its life, despite the excellence of the food, brought on occasional attacks of a colicky nature during the first two or three weeks. The fruits served at table and for lunch when out on excursions were too tempting, and I did not exercise sufficient discretion in eating things that were new to my palate. The disturbances came on at night, usually, and made sleep for the time impossible. I had brought some remedies for such troubles in my valise, and managed to treat myself with a degree of success. At home two or three severe experiences had suggested possible trouble in that superfluous part of the human intestinal economy called the appendix, and I had for a year meditated consulting a surgeon. One night following a long excursion with the Bruces, father and son, I had scarcely fallen asleep when I was seized with so keen a pain that in my half-waking state I must have groaned unconsciously aloud. The next minute a light tapping was heard at the doorway of my room.

“Yes,” I said.

“May I come in?” It was Willis who pushed aside the light hangings, and came to the bed, where I sat up, rubbing the painful side.

“You are suffering, Malcolm. I will send mother to you.” Before I could interpose an objection he was out of the room, and soon returned with Milline, clothed in a loose garment of dainty fashion, evidently her bed costume, following him.

“Oh, I am sorry,” exclaimed I, with some vehemence, “that you have got up, Mrs.—Milline. I can manage it. Only a colic. Too many nuts and tamarinds!—and I overate at supper; I was very hungry.”

“But, Malcolm, you are in great pain. I know it by your breathing and posture,” replied the excellent woman. “Lie down now, and let me see what is the matter.” This so soothingly and gently that I stretched myself upon the bed—perhaps a little regardless of appearances, for the pain was intense.

“In my satchel you will find two or three bottles; please to bring them to me,” I muttered between gasps.

Seating herself by the bed, this dear woman commenced to rub my abdomen with great tenderness, saying: “Willis, you know the herb bags in the dark pantry; bring me No. 6 and some hot water as soon as you can, and the elastic syringe. This might prove serious, if permitted to go on. My grandfather had similar spells. Now let me do what I can for you, my boy.”

My bowels seemed tied up in a knot, and quivered as the agonizing twinges swept through them. Milline kept at work with her gentle hands, sweeping along the corded lines, meanwhile talking to me like a fond mother to a son. Willis came in seven or eight minutes with the articles required, and at Milline’s direction placed a large handful of leaves from the bag in a soft towel, folded it and steeped

the cushion-like mass in the hot water. Now came the especially embarrassing part to me. Milline had been manipulating my abdomen over my night wrap; but taking the steaming cushion from Willis she deftly uncovered my right side and laid it snugly upon the painful part, and over the compress adjusted a dry napkin. Then, covering me with the bed spread, she said:

“Now, Malcolm, boy, I think you will feel better in a little while. If not, please speak, won’t you? and we will try something more. You are our friend and we must do all we can to make you well. When you get up to-morrow morning use the syringe. The water in the pitcher will do. You know how?”

“Yes, my dear Milline thank you.” I had suffered so much that in the reaction that followed the almost instant relief of the fomentation some tears would force themselves to my cheek. Milline saw them, for, with a most tender expression on her face, she touched her lips to my forehead and then left the room.

Soothed by this most unlooked-for treatment, the sweet aroma of the damp leaves pervading the room, I fell into a deep sleep, and on awaking in the broad light of morning found Willis and Stella at my bedside.

“You are better, Malcolm,” both exclaimed as I opened my eyes.

“Yes, quite restored, cousins, thanks to your angel mother.”

“Oh, mother knows how to manage such things, I can tell you,” quoth Willis. “Now you will take the other treatment she advised, of course”—the young fellow detected an expression of dissent in my face—“you must complete the treatment. You can give me the towels to take down. If you want I will rub you.”

“Very kind of you, my dear boy, but I feel quite myself; that compress was magical. Mother Mil-line must give me some of the leaves or tell me where to find them.”

“Certainly, cousin Malcolm, we know where they grow, for Stella and I collect them.”

“Well, now, I will use the syringe, and dress, and be down with you soon.”

“Don’t hurry yourself, Malcolm, it isn’t late,” and Stella danced out of the room, Willis following. The charming confidence of these young people in the wisdom of their mother, evidenced by their insistence upon my following her suggestion, simple enough in itself, affected me deeply.

CHAPTER IX.

AN EMBARRASSING EMERGENCY.

ANOTHER instance that tested my Northern squeamishness even more occurred on an excursion with Ellice. Presuming that the male reader, like myself, is of old British stock, he will appreciate the difference in the circumstances between a mother of well-grown children and a charming young woman yet unmarried. Ellice and I had taken a run on my goalone, about fifteen miles, into a lower district abounding with streams. The flower-richness of the region seemed even greater than I had noted in other districts, and wild plants were more common. Ellice was attired in her tramping costume, resembling in pattern the tourist dress of our athletic ladies; for instance, a loose waist of soft yellow, trimmed with olive ribbon, a short skirt of silvery gray, semi-Turkish leggings of darker gray clasping the ankles in graceful folds and shoes of yellow canvas, in the moccasin style, well fitting her strong yet by no means large feet.

The *tout ensemble* was very becoming and perfectly suitable for the purpose in view. I should say that the men of Oudemont were old-fashioned, in that they generally wore short trousers belted or

buckled under the knee, with long stockings and moccasins, and while in the country I preferred the costume myself, wearing an outfit given me by Willis soon after my arrival. The trousers and blouse were of mixed pattern, in which gray and blue were the dominant colors, with slight splashes of maroon. The moccasins were a dark tan, with straps that secured them firmly to the feet by means of "bronze" buckles; that is, the bronze made by the metal workers of the country. Being of good height and fairly proportioned, I did not consider myself an ill-looking fellow in the new garments. Made by an Oudemont tailoress, the fit was admirable. The fabric, strong and light in weight, possessed a singular elasticity that rendered every movement perfectly free; bending or stooping there was no feeling of the slightest restraint.

Leaving our vehicle by a clump of laurel, we pushed into a meadow thick with grasses and flowers, seeking a plant of which Ellice desired further specimens. Coming to a brook about fifteen feet wide, my companion saw on the farther side what seemed to be an example of the species.

"Malcolm, there it is, I believe—and in the bud, as I want it. We'll cross."

"There is no bridge hereabouts that I can see, Ellice, and the water is quite deep."

"Perhaps we can get over easily a little above," the girl rejoined, and directed her steps upstream. I followed. Going some forty yards, we came to a

point where the brook widened and ran over a shallow, gravelly bed. Here it was not more than a foot deep, seemingly, anywhere.

“We can cross now, Malcolm, without any trouble.” Dropping the reed basket she carried, the girl began to remove her shoes. Of course I followed the example, although sensitive about showing my feet to a lady. However, it was mere reciprocity. The shoes off, the stockings followed, and then the leggings were tucked up close to the knee, displaying, to my sidelong look, a pair of ankles that would be the pride of most of our city belles. I will confess that my movements were slower than hers; yet I was soon by her side, with my knickers pushed above the knee. Springing into the rippling water, she led the way, and we were soon at the spot where the plant was growing. After examining it with some comment it was gathered, and the vicinity scanned for other specimens, but none of this particular sort were to be found. Recrossing, I took the lead, and was about to step upon the bank when an exclamation of surprise or pain caused me to turn quickly.

Leaping upon the bank by my side, she pointed to her right leg. “Something has bitten me there, Malcolm.” A few inches above the ankle, where the limb expands with its muscular fulness, was a leech-like creature. Stooping down, I snapped it off with my thumb.

“I wonder if it is poisonous, Malcolm. I have

heard that there were such things—ones that could do harm.”

Crushing the animal into the dry gravel with the rod I carried, I said :

“Ellice, girl, what shall I do? Can it really be serious?”

She was pale and made no answer. Evidently there was something serious in this affair. Taking her by the hand, we walked to a cluster of low palms, where there was a little hillock in their shade, and she sat down.

“Let me examine the wound, Ellice. I have read of such things.”

She stretched out the foot. “Look and see if there is a livid ring circling the bite.”

I knelt down and looked closely and saw, amid the pink surrounding, a blue circle with a small black dot in the centre.

“There is.”

“Then it must be the poison viper. Let us get back as soon as we can, for——” The words failed her, yet as I gazed, trembling myself, at her, she smiled sweetly as if her words were half in jest.

“Is there not something I can do at once—some herb or leaf I can apply. Surely, dear Ellice, you are so skilful in these things.”

She was evidently growing faint, for her answer came in a very low tone. “It is so long since any one was stung. I never knew any one who was. We thought the mongosta had destroyed all these

poisonous things long ago. I am feeling weak, Malcolm."

"I am so sorry. Oh, what can I do?" I really felt quite unmanned. All my usual coolness seemed to have left me. But here was a most desperate strait. I would pick her up and carry her to the go-alone. But it would be more than a good hour's ride to her home. Then it occurred to me that life had been saved by sucking the poison of a snake bite, and in as cheerful a tone as could be assumed I cried: "I know what to do, Ellice. Be hopeful, for my sake."

Taking a cup from her basket, I rushed to the brook, cleansed my mouth, filled the cup and returned to the girl, knelt down and applied my lips to the small wound. The touch to her warm flesh caused a tremor that I felt, but she said nothing. That there was something of great power in the venom of that viper, or whatever it was, appeared clearly enough from the pungent taste that I immediately perceived. Repeatedly I rinsed my mouth with the brook water and continued the effort to extract the poison until the hot, acrid taste had disappeared and the livid areola gave way to a more natural hue.

One of the more valued presents of my mother was a small silver flask, which I usually carried in a side pocket, stocked with Jamaica rum, as a provision against recurrences of my stomach disorder. There had been no trouble of the kind since the time

when Mother Bruce ministered to my need, yet it was deemed prudent to be provided against an attack, especially when I was at a distance from home and friends. With my handkerchief moistened freely I bathed the site of the wound with the alcoholic fluid, and bound the pocket convenience around the leg. Now picking up her stockings, I turned to Ellice. She lay back upon the hillock, with her eyes closed, her lips parted in a smile of evident enjoyment. I had been so absorbed in my extemporized surgery that scarcely a glance was given to her face until now.

“Ellice, may I help you to put on your stockings? And are you not feeling better?”

Starting into a sitting posture, her face coloring richly, she said: “Oh, Malcolm, yes indeed, I am much better. I was really frightened, but you have saved me. We could scarcely have gotten home in time.”

Her hands trembled as she reached for the stockings, and I saw that she was by no means the strong, self-helpful woman of a little while before; so, kneeling down again by those dainty feet, I assisted her to resume stockings and moccasins.

“This is not the first time you have helped a woman in this way, I am sure, Malcolm?”

“No, I have often done as much for mother when dressing.”

“Then you Americans do much as we do—and

why not? Does not the Royal Law command *all* to help each other?"

"I don't know exactly what your Royal Law commands, Ellice, but according to my ideas of charity and common humanity men and women should do all that is possible for each other in a situation of necessity."

"Most certainly, my dear friend; but we believe not only in cases of necessity, but in all cases where it is proper and acceptable we should help each other."

"Then here is my arm, brave little woman, to help you to the wagon," I responded, with a light laugh.

Leaning on me, she walked to our ready conveyance, and soon, with more speed than customary in my trips, we were pushing over the road homeward. On the way Ellice said little, and my own mind and heart were full of reflections—thoughts at once tender, apprehensive, solicitous, mingled with wondering as to the final outcome of this fairly tragic occurrence and its effect upon my position in Oudemond. So I said but little myself. It was dawning upon my conviction that this charming woman had already taken a place in the inner recesses of my soul, and while there was a feeling of deep pleasure in such conviction, the gravity of this unexpected and peculiar relation to her and her country offered many suggestions that were both puzzling and vexatious to a sensitive man who had always prided himself on living above suspicion.

Percy Denton was trimming the shrubbery in front of the house as we rode in. Jumping to the ground and offering my hand to Ellice, I said rather peremptorily:

“Percy, where shall I find one of your doctors?”

He looked at me sharply. “Why, Malcolm?”

“Ellice was bitten by a dangerous animal down in the field, and should have the attention of a skillful man at once.”

“Sister, stay in the goalone,” said the young man. She had not alighted, but stood up with her hand in mine. Now she sat down again upon the low cushion, and Percy, handing the pruning knife to me, added: “Perhaps you would like to try your hand on these bushes, Malcolm,” and stepped into the vehicle and was off.

This seemed rather abrupt, but the young man’s concern for his sister warranted informal action; and then, too, he might know more about such things as bites and stings than myself. I was using the pruner somewhat listlessly when Father Denton came out, followed by his wife. Turning toward them I waited, scarcely knowing what to say until they were close to me.

“You have been unfortunate, Malcolm.”

“Yes.”

“My Helen was informed by Stella an hour or more ago—she had received a thought from Ellice; the girl can send—that she was hurt and that you were doing all in your power for her, and

later that she was feeling better. We knew that you would return as soon as you could."

"'Twas as you say, sir." I then gave an account of the matter, and was still in converse with the elderly pair when the brother and sister returned. In answer to their earnest inquiry Ellice answered :

"Dear parents, I am much better, yet must own to some remaining weakness. Our studious friend Lewis applied the extract used in poisons, but we think that Malcolm did so well for me that it cannot be long before I shall be quite myself."

"Lewis thinks that the creature is one of those things our early settlers found so deadly," added Percy, "and which we supposed had been quite exterminated. But father, mother, let us sit down. Malcolm, I am sure, is weary enough."

Ellice had dropped upon a circular bench built around the stem of a sweeping tulip, and we all took seats on the same.

Breaking silence first, I said : "Your people must have had very dangerous things here at one time, as they have them still in the Amazon country—snakes, insects, vermin of one kind or other; but the mode of culture and improvements you have made everywhere have, of course, cleared the land of the pests."

I was apprehensive that there would be some further reference to my part in the recent matter, and sought by this remark to anticipate what might be said. As there was no immediate rejoinder, I went on :

“With us, when one is bitten, or stung, or poisoned, it is the practice to use antiseptic remedies. They are swallowed, or, what is considered better, injected into the skin. We have antitoxics of various names used as antidotes in the diseases and fevers regarded malignant, and for affections of the skin, and so on. These antitoxics are, for the most part, extracts of the poisons or germs that cause the diseases. It is claimed that by their use in certain solutions or attenuations parasites that are hostile to human health can be destroyed or so weakened that men have a better chance to recover from sickness and to keep well.”

“We have heard of your methods,” said father Denton, “and some of our chemists have experimented with what are called ‘cultures.’ The old practice of inoculation, familiar enough to you, is of an analogous nature. Our people early got the idea that living simply and ordering things about them in a decent fashion was the best way to avoid sickness, and when sick to get well; and on this line they have practiced, for the most part.”

“And with most excellent results, friend Denton, as I have already seen. You need no antitoxic, for with your hygiene there seems to be no medium, as the doctors term it, for poisonous germs to thrive in. I have yet to see any low, marshy land or stagnant water in your country.”

“No, Malcolm, our system of drainage and soil improvement has effected a great change in the sur-

face of the land. Our family groups are separated enough—so that all have plenty of air to breathe and room to think and work in.”

“Taking the whole area into account,” interposed Percy, “we have but twenty-eight persons to the square mile—is that not so, father?”

“About right, son.”

NATURAL RESULTS OF PRUDENCE.

“But you don’t mean to say, brother Denton,” I asked, “that your people are never sick?”

“No, certainly,” the elder replied, with a laugh. “Some are not as strong as others, and then we make mistakes, or are careless, and must suffer the consequences; but serious illness is quite rare. The more you know of our ways of life, the better you will understand why our people keep in health and live to a good age.”

It came out clearly enough, as Denton predicted, as the result of observation, that the Oudemonites were sagacious in putting into practice maxims and principles that civilized nations have for centuries recognized as true, yet for the most part have not adopted into their manners and customs. Here was a people that lived “close to Nature’s heart,” it might be said, supplied with a great variety of the products of garden, field and forest, yet their food was prepared in simple form, the elaborate arts of the Northern cook being quite ignored. The fries,

sautés, ragoûts and mixtures, with their inflammatory additions of condiment and spice, were seen on none of their tables. Cake and pastried confections, heavy with fat or oil and smothered in sugar, they were not familiar with. For their drink there was the clear, fresh water that ran in deep courses through every home plot, besides fruit juices and the succulent sap of various trees and shrubs. Grapes of different species hung on trellises in the garden plots, ripening in succession almost the year round; but nowhere did I find them using wine. The nearest approach to anything that could be called stimulating was the kind of coffee they prepared for the table, and that, as I have already remarked, was unlike ours in its absence of the narcotic or excitental principle.

In their manner of working they were moderate, whatever the vocation pursued, so that there was no strain or irritation, and for sleep the common allowance of eight hours supplied what was necessary to recruit nerve and muscle. Then there was the mutual good-fellowship of the people, the sympathy and kind-heartedness exhibited by all, to prompt that ready inter-relation of physical function so essential to robust vitality. A people so heartily coöperative as these Oudemonites must act and react upon each other most happily for health and comfortable feeling. Thus it was that they were uniformly well, and if through any cause one became ill his constitutional disposition to health and the happy social

atmosphere that surrounded him contributed powerfully to offset a serious consequence. While our pathologists seem inclined to think that an organism, by vaccination or the absorption of certain poisonous substances, may be rendered immune to dangerous maladies, I am satisfied that these simple folk demonstrated in their living that a sound and vigorous constitution supplies the best immunity. With them it was the contagion of health.

THE WOMANLY RELATION.

In a few days Ellice had entirely recovered her wonted vivacity. I was a trifle disappointed that but slight reference to the affair was made by any one to me. The district *Bulletins* mentioned it in a merely casual way, one suggesting the expediency of a thorough exploration of the region for other specimens of the reptile that might be lurking there, and thus prevent further "accidents" of the kind. Ellice being much beloved in her district and elsewhere, friends and relatives expressed to her their great pleasure at her escape from a possibly grave termination of the incident, while to me, if any allusion were made regarding my part in it, they intimated little more than satisfaction that I had not been wanting in resource. My *amour propre* was a little touched; but, then, every man in Oudemond would be expected to do his best in a moment of peril, and, as a matter of course, when that was con-

sidered, the common estimate of my conduct was in accordance merely with the received standard of manhood. Knowing as I did of the non-use of alcoholics here, I was a little puzzled that no one offered any comment on my having in possession a sample of so strong a liquor as Jamaica rum.

One outcome of this incident, however, and that which caused me much gratification, was a closer association with Ellice. The girl exhibited a confidence and openness toward me now that was quite sisterly. We saw each other frequently; in fact, she became my chief guide and companion in rides and walks. There was no remark or question concerning this intimacy, and ruminating about it I was led one day, when in conversation with Marcus, the elder, to remark:

“Your women, my friend, enjoy a freedom that goes much beyond ours. Latterly, there has grown up with us a spirit of independence that was quite unknown fifty years ago. Women now go into business, compete with men, have their own societies, clubs, etc., yet in their social life women of our best class do not exhibit quite the freedom that yours do.”

“It may be as you say, Malcolm; but we are not aware of any special independence being shown by our women, beyond what should be of natural right. When full grown and mature in mind they take equal place with men among us, a matter of mere justice. In some respects, you must know, the female is of greater importance than the male to so-

ciety; our perpetuation, the home and its domestic economics, and other things depend more upon woman than man. Perhaps it may be said that we have come to appreciate the character and capacity of women at near their true value, and what you see of moral elevation among us is due, in a great measure, to their active participation in our affairs generally."

"I have no objection, venerable councillor, to make to the economics of your social arrangement. With us of the North, however, there is a prevalent habit, tacitly held or expressed, of considering woman as lacking in strength of mind, too volatile or fluctuating in opinion, too emotional and susceptible in feeling to be trusted in matters of grave concern."

"Well, my young friend," he rejoined, in a tone suggestive of pity, "we have no fear on that score, believing that woman's place is by the side of man in all things. Here, at any rate, her interests are the same as ours, and we find that with the same privileges of education and experience she can render efficient service in all things that concern directly our true welfare."

"But she cannot go everywhere, work in your mines and machine shops, attempt severe and laborious things, which are not suited to her nature," I rejoined, a little warmly.

"You mistake, Malcolm, because you have not had time to become well acquainted with us," said

the old man, quietly. "We have very few enterprises that women can not take some part in. Our mining and other work is conducted in ways that are not severe, especially. We do not believe in compelling either men or women to do things that are dangerous to life or limb. Coercion, indeed, does not find place in our unwritten law, because there is no subjection in the sense of your economists recognized by any man or woman among us to any other man or woman. The theory that the few are born to rule and the masses to serve we consider unjust and inhuman, and is advocated by sophists who favor the perpetuation of a class having privileges and advantages over the majority of their fellow men. You will see as you become further acquainted with our life that care is taken always to prevent mishaps. Our chemists and engineers are cautious by habit, and in developing their plans make haste slowly, run no risks themselves and guard against damage to others. We have secured control of agents most powerful and even terribly destructive, but by processes that have involved comparatively little peril; and those who employ these agents are thoroughly skilled in their handling. Indeed, we value life too much. Our people are too dear to us to be exposed unnecessarily to danger. There are some adventurous spirits among us, to be sure, who are allowed a little rein, but our system of education enables the young to become self-restraining and to curb a disposition toward recklessness and over-

daring. Women, being naturally cautious and circumspect, exert a happy influence when some discovery or new development would tempt the aspiring to expose themselves to unknown risk and danger.

“You refer me to the competition of women in spheres hitherto occupied by men only, and I can well perceive by the tone of your remarks, Malcolm, that you are apprehensive of unfortunate complications as the result of it. As your society and business relations are, there must be some very unhappy effects of such a movement on the part of your women, a disturbance of the old order that has its points of objection. But you must confess that your women have been forced to invade their brothers’ fields of action in the struggle for very existence that your social policy has evolved. Our women incline to those things that are in keeping with their nature and taste. Home and the things that make for home, comfort and happiness, are their chief concern, whatever else they may do. Feeling no compulsion, no restriction as regards their liberty of action, they appear to respond the more cheerfully to the natural bias of woman nature.”

I had listened very attentively to this long speech of the councillor, but now broke out :

“Verily you have sounded a great truth, Marcus; in the freedom of your social system there is shown man’s obedience to the law of being. Only they who have the truth and live it are free.”

The councillor smiled at my earnestness and held out his hand.

“I have a little errand to neighbor Hancefoot yonder, my young enthusiast. A happy meeting soon.”

“A happy meeting soon, my dear modern Lycurgus,” I replied, and we parted.

CHAPTER X.

ON SCHOOL MATTERS.

“MALCOLM *must* go to school with me to-day; won’t you, cousin?” asked Stella.

“Certainly, my dear Stelline,” I answered, poising a section of roasted breadfruit that I had just dipped in guava sauce upon my fork. In passing it might be interlined here that the table furnishings of the people among whom I was living were of a metallic composition at once light, lustrous and strong. Plates, cups, cutlery, etc., were of this generally. Into the composition entered silver, aluminum, a kind of hematite and one or two other metals obtained from the aluminum beds. In preparing the flux the smiths varied the proportions according to the purpose in view, obtaining a hard and bright or a soft and dull combination. Very little glass was seen anywhere, what they had being used mainly for optical and scientific purposes. A very fine variety of mica, procured in large slabs from the aluminum beds, furnished their windows and outer doors with perfectly transparent and durable plates. Lead, zinc and other cheap ores were abundant and used in the Oudemont industries and arts. A feature of the house furnishing that at first struck me oddly

was the absence of fastenings on their doors, and these were commonly hung on double-acting hinges. The houses, however, that had been built in the last twenty years had no interior doors—curtains, or what we call portières, of soft, graceful fabric merely dividing one room from another. Returning to the colloquy interrupted by this digression:

“Certainly it would be a treat to see how your schools are run, Stelline,” I said, at the same time placing the succulent morsel that had been hovering near my face while speaking, in my mouth.

“I didn’t know but that you would be away on some already planned tramp with Ellice,” the girl rejoined in a light, mischievous tone; “for since that affair in the shallows the Dentons appear to have a sort of monopoly of a certain gentleman from the far North, you know.”

“That reminds me,” observed father Bruce, “that Caroline Newton was looking for specimens up that way a day or two ago, with a party of young folks from district eleven, and they found the remains of the creature supposed to have bitten Ellice. It is over in the chemical laboratory, in charge of Pintersoe, if you care to see it, folks.”

“No, thank you, Jasper. I had enough of it, for one. Let the good Pintersoe make an analysis of the virus.”

“I think that is his intention,” remarked Willis. “Two or three of our fellows who are pretty well

up in zoölogy say that it is, or was, one of the most poisonous things known, and wonder whether any more of the kind exist. At any rate, a careful inspection of the neighborhood is now on foot, and a mongosta or two will be set to hunting for them."

"That's the animal, Willis, which was mentioned by Ellice. You keep them for such a purpose, I judge."

"The mongosta, yes—a few now. In the early days the country abounded in venomous snakes, lizards, spiders, beetles, and so on. Some mongostas were brought in and set to work, and it was not long before they had quite cleared out or destroyed the dangerous crowd. There were colonies of predacious birds here then—flesh eaters; great eagles, vultures, owls, cranes, and so on; but with the clearing of the land and the disappearance of reptiles and insects they are quite gone, too. Our monkey servants are great helps in keeping our trees and vines free of the larger worms and vermin that the birds do not dispose of."

"Yes, I have seen one now and then scampering about in the branches, and watched him picking up dried and rolled-up leaves and peering at them in his droll way."

"Funny enough, Malcolm, isn't it?" laughed Stella. "Ellice says they are natural entomologists; they learn to know an injurious bug or worm so quickly you would be surprised, and some of them they eat with a cordial relish."

“Oh, a perverted appetite, surely; why do you permit such carnivorous expression?” I asked, jokingly. “But, then, I ask you, friends, not to attempt an apology for the weakness of an inferior race. I would not wound Jabber’s feelings; he is too good a valet, and his comical ways are a tonic daily.”

A merry laugh went round the table; then Milline said: “Evidently the little rogue likes you very much, for whenever you go out and don’t whistle he is restless and disconsolate for a while.”

“Yes, mother Milline, we are excellent friends, and I have become quite learned in his management.”

“Malcolm acted a little funny at first when Jabber was given him, didn’t he, mother?” said Stella, archly. “I guess they do not have many monkeys where he lives.”

“No, my little cousin, so acutely observant,” I replied; “we see them mainly in the animal shows, and do not know, as you do, how useful they can be. But don’t forget that I am going to school with you, and tell the teachers to be very amiable and not ask me many hard questions, because I haven’t had time to study the lessons, and no one is home to write an excuse, so the teacher will let me off.”

The young folks looked at me quizzically as I said this, and there came a grave expression on the faces of father and mother Bruce, as if they were uncertain as to the moral significance of the remark. I added:

“Up our way when our children do not know their lessons or are late going to school, we write excuses for them so that no bad marks shall be put to their account.”

“That means you have a system of marking children good or bad, Malcolm,” inquired Jasper.

“Yes.”

“How peculiar!” said Willis, reflectively.

“Why, have you not a system of merits and demerits in your schools?”

“We do not know anything of the kind,” father Bruce replied. “Our children are expected to attend their schools and to learn the lessons given them. If they are not there, or if unable to answer questions in their studies, what they may say in explanation is accepted.”

“But, father Bruce, everybody comes who can,” cried Stella, earnestly. “We all love our teachers and lessons, and wouldn’t stay away—no, indeed, on any account. I don’t know a—yes, Neil Brink was absent one day—oh, a long time ago, because the day before we all went up into the woods, and he ate too much custard apple and had cramps, and his mother kept him in bed next day until he got over them. Poor boy, he was so sorry that he said he’d never eat any more custard apple. But custard apple can’t really hurt me, mother?”

“You may eat too much of any good thing, little daughter. That was a very warm day, and I think the boy became overheated. He is a very active,

nervous boy, and you said, if I remember, that he ran about and climbed trees until he was clear tired out."

"Oh, yes, mother Bruce, that was so. And we were all sorry poor Neil had to stay home."

"And I well remember having too much of a good thing one day not very long ago," was my intervention, "and how nicely a kind mother fixed me, and as I have been very well ever since I am going to give my best respects to her delicious toasted breadfruit and honey every time she dare put it on this table."

"Now, my dear boy," insisted the excellent woman, with a tenderness that mellowed the smile of pleasure on her face, "don't say anything more about that, and you shall have the dish every time you ask for it."

"Thank your graciousness, Milline Bruce, for its consideration of my appetite, but, really, whenever I sit here the zest of what is before me excludes thought of other things; so I shall leave the matter of ordering the bill of fare to the *maîtresse de la cuisine*, who shows so much skill in catering to our caprices of taste and appetite."

"And at the same time feeds us so well," added the elder Bruce, laughing with the others at this attempt at badinage and compliment.

These folk are slow feeders, and being naturally disposed that way myself, I took on their habit in an exaggerated degree, and usually, with the cur-

rent of talk that always accompanied meals, at the Bruces especially, was slow in finishing my cup of native coffee, or tree milk, or whatever else might be the liquid accompaniment. Stella's sympathetic reference to the unhappy experience of Neil, and my expression of affection for her mother's dainties, at the risk of any gastric displeasure that might threaten, were followed by our general rise from the table and the conclusion of the breakfast.

A GLIMPSE OF THE SYSTEM.

An Oudemon schoolhouse does not differ much in form from the average dwelling. Two stories in height, with four large rooms on each floor, and a square inner court planted with trees and shrubs, it is a pleasant rendezvous for pedagogue and pupil. As in the North, women predominate for teachers, the men giving attention chiefly to special branches, like language, chemistry, certain industrial studies and physical training. For the first half dozen years the fundamentals of education are taught, attention being carefully given to the order of nature in developing the faculties. After this preparatory course there is a differentiation in the training of individuals, according to their aptitude or intellectual bias. From the school of the district to the general college, with its seven or eight departments, the pupil is transferred when competent for the advanced and special lines of study. Stella was in her last year,

and expected to enter upon a collegiate course the following autumn, to study certain branches of physics and natural history, and then to teach for a time. It was the common opinion that a season of teaching in the preparatory school was good training for the grown-up girl, and made her all the better fitted for the duties of life, in the home and out of it. At the same time married women were not debarred from the post of teacher, if unusual capacity and inclination were shown for its functions; but were expected to devote only a part of their time to the schoolroom.

The several classes were small, limited to twenty, and, so far as possible, the pupils were assorted in such a manner as to have together those of nearly similar mental abilities. At recess, in the playground, all ages and grades were together, no distinction of scholarly rank being considered there. With the duller, backward pupils pains were specially taken, teachers being given them of superior judgment and skill, but no method was employed for forcing their faculties into action. There were no set times for examinations or promotions, the children passing from one study to another by their own intellectual inertia, or in obedience to the natural prompting of development. The classification of pupils according to their natural capacity and temperamental type was a great factor in the training process, contributing, as it manifestly did, to thoroughness in the acquirement of such studies as

were pursued by this or that one. I had learned much from Ellice concerning the organization of their schools, and being prepared therefore for this visit with Stella was all the more interested in what I saw.

On the way my young companion said: "You are so fond of our dear little ones, Malcolm cousin, I shall take you first into the primary and leave you there for the hour until recess, unless you object."

"No, *ma petite*"—Stella liked this French familiarity, and it was used often when talking with her—"I shall not object. Ellice has assured me that the primary in this district is particularly nice."

"Ellice, always Ellice; you're quoting her a great deal, cousin Malcolm," exclaimed the girl, with a little pout on her lip. "Well, she knows, and I expect to try my hand before many years there, too, and I don't know how I shall get along with the little witches."

"Excellently, I am positive, *ma petite*. You have what we call the knack of interesting them and the discretion of a little mother."

"Oh, you great man!" the girl looked up in my face, highly pleased, at the same time mischievously pinching my arm. "Father often says," she added, demurely, "that the happiness and greatness of our people, and all peoples, must depend upon the early training of the young children."

"As the twig is bent the tree's inclined, Stella."

"That's in Pope, isn't it? We have lately read his

‘Essay on Man’ in the rhetoric class—— There *she* comes now, really.”

We were passing the Denton house, and Ellice had just emerged from the door. We waited until she joined us.

“You are not going to have him this morning, Ellice, dear,” she exclaimed, in affected triumph. Ellice glanced at me amusedly, and said:

“I do not want him this morning, dear child. He can be yours all now.”

For my own part I felt a trifle uneasy over this train of remark, and broke in:

“Yes, Ellice, she is taking me to school. I need some freshening up. It is so long since I left the seminary up there that I am rusty in many of the common branches. In fact, Stella is going to place me in the primary for an hour—quite wise on her part, is it not?”

“Very good,” laughed Ellice. “Yes, I think Malcolm will learn a great deal there. Father Jasper says he has a big head, with plenty of room in it.”

“Wow, my young lady comrades, but he hit me right then, I verily believe!” I exclaimed. The tone in which these words were said evidently startled the girls, for each seized a hand and looked up so gravely that I could not repress a laugh. Stella asked:

“What is it, dear cousin?” and Ellice added:

“I hope that I did not say anything disagreeable, Malcolm.”

“Well, no; you could not, fair daughters of Eve; but I will be frank enough to advise you that up our way we have a saying very like that of father Bruce, which is sometimes applied to a person who is not particularly bright.”

“You mean wanting in good sense,” said Ellice, solicitously, still holding my hand.

“Yes, that is more to the point.”

“Oh, dear Malcolm,” cried the lively young woman, “father Bruce never thought anything of the kind. He meant, and I understood him, that you were very clever in seeing things, and could gather in a great deal of information. I saw his breath test a few days ago; Caroline showed it to me, Stella. The color indicates a great readiness of observation that can come only from a natural largeness of faculty and a wide experience in the use of memory.”

The frank manner of this remark and the steady gaze into my face of two pairs of wide dewy eyes was convincing enough.

“Spare me, good girls,” I said, laughing heartily. “I only wish that your very kind opinion may be confirmed.” Then in a graver manner: “You must remember, though, I am a foreigner, and likely to seem peculiar in my talk and manner. It would be no easy task, be assured, to live up to the standard of you excellent folk.”

“We do not forget that you are a dear friend from a distant land,” said Ellice, in a like vein; “but we prefer Malcolm as he is, don’t we, Stella?”

"Yes, indeed, and I would not have him change a bit," replied the young girl, emphatically.

"Then with so large a majority of the meeting in favor of the *status quo*, as our lawyers say, I shall endeavor to act my natural self on all future occasions, my dear ladies."

By this time we had arrived at the school building, where Ellice took leave of us, and Stella and I went in.

AMONG THE CHILDREN.

The primary department proved interesting at first sight. On the broad walls hung charts and pictures descriptive of such things as belong to every-day life: plants, birds, animals, the topography of the country, scenes in social life, designs of houses, garden and field views, illustrations of food products, fruits, nuts, grains; minerals, also, of many sorts that were used in the furnishings of home and for machinery and tools and other conveniences. A few neatly painted maxims of order and conduct added variety to the collection. These, however, were not in the style of letter and spelling with which an American child is familiar, but in the character peculiar to Oudemon. The notebook of Restling illustrated the style of writing and printing in this country—a brief method of representing words that was easily learned by the young, and convenient in a high degree for all purposes of record.

and communication. In a few weeks I had acquired a fair knowledge of it, and was able to read the news bulletins of the community and such books as my much-occupied time permitted me to examine.

The instruction given was but a series of object lessons relating to the useful and necessary, the first aim being to impress the child with true ideas concerning its nature, its relations to others, and its having a part, as a member of the human family, in the world of activity and usefulness. I had been struck by the deference shown by the young folks to their elders, and by their frank sincerity on all occasions, evasion, dissimulation, cunning or mischievous trickery to obtain ends that child caprice might desire being apparently unknown in their conduct. I saw at this school how it was that such excellent habits were established; the example and admonition of parents with regard to the proprieties of thought and action were well supplemented by the systematic teaching of this schoolroom. There were textbooks carefully prepared on the level of the child mind, inculcating the principles of moral habit. These books not only contained precepts and lessons on behavior and conduct, but illustrated their meaning in simple, attractive terms with stories and incidents from the life surrounding the child. Thus to be true, sincere, good-natured, kind and helpful were taught as principles essential in personal education, and of more importance than the physical and intellectual training that formed part of the curric-

ulum. It was not duty that was impressed upon the young mind as a major reason for good manners and proper habits, so much as it was the rightness and privilege of good behavior and moral integrity and their necessary relation to love and respect. Then, too, the happiness that attended upright conduct had its examples on all sides and gave a natural stimulus to the disposition to become worthy of the respect and affection of friends and companions. Moral truth was seen to be fundamental to intellectual truth; consistency in the character but complementary to exactness in the secular activities.

It seemed to me that what I had read of that old pedagogue philosopher, Herbart, had obtained a certain realization in the family and school management of Oudemon. The insistence upon habit as the seat of good conduct in the individual and in the wider community life which marks the teachings of Herbart certainly had here an apt illustration, with results that would have warmed the heart of that earnest sage to a high degree of exultation. It must be noted, however, that it was not the impression of maxims and precepts so much as it was the showing the child in the general life surrounding him the right way to act that had such thorough effect in his evolution.

After some exercise in singing, the interpretation of sentences written on a blackboard, the analysis of a few flowers that had been brought in by one of the pupils, a recess was given, when the little ones

immediately surrounded me. I encouraged them to ask questions, and told them some incidents from my boy life in the distant city from which I came. All listened eagerly, and some made remarks on what I said that intimated surprising good sense. Relating some of the differences between our homes and theirs, how whole blocks hundreds of feet in length stood on both sides of a narrow street, with no trees or gardens about them, one little girl said: "Oh, good stranger, how can you breathe when so shut in from the beautiful sun? I would think that all your people would be very sad. We could not live without our trees and gardens and lakes and brooks, could we, dear children?"

"Oh, no," they burst out, and looked at me quite pityingly, as deprived of certain great means of happiness.

"When you go back, dear Malcolm," said another, "will you not tell the people to take away a great many of the houses and lay out gardens with pretty walks, so that they can have nice homes, as we have?"

Of course I said that I wished our people had as lovely a country and such pleasant homes as my dear little friends here had, because I knew it would be better for our children and everybody.

After the recess came music, two scholars from a higher department playing, one upon a violin and the other upon a harp. To the measure simple gymnastics were gone through, with practice in attitude

and walk. It was not marching that was taught, but stepping in an easy rhythmic fashion. Running exercises also were given in the court, for the purpose of promoting development of muscle and an easy carriage of the body. I did not wonder now at the upright form and free movement that were characteristic of the Oudemonites. It was only a natural sequence of the early training received by them as children.

It was customary to have the pupils eat their mid-day meal at the school, teachers and scholars associating in the pleasant function. All were supplied with boxes or small baskets containing the day's supply of provender. Stella had brought a double ration. We all went into the court and sat around the tinkling fountain, and there discussed the meal, every one making the contents of his or her napkin common stock. It was a delightful company of young folks, indeed, all sparkling with mirth and prankishness, yet with never a disposition to tease or do anything to annoy. For the time I became a boy again, trying to emulate the example of the teachers who mingled with their pupils as one of them in sympathy, cheer and tenderness.

CHAPTER XI.

A PLEASANT SURPRISE.

THE clock in the court had struck fifteen hours when I returned to Bruce's. Jabber whisked out and prancing up to me, grinned so fiercely that I could not but imagine that something unusual had happened. He seized the skirt of my coat and drew me toward the outbuilding where the implements for gardening, and the vehicles used by the family were stored. Chattering volubly he ran inside, I following. Then he pointed to a new three-wheeled autolat upon the seat of which lay a folded paper addressed to "Our Dear Friend Malcolm." In the style of Oudemon I read, after some study—"Will Malcolm accept for his use hereafter while in our country—and may he stay a long time with us?—this little carriage? STILES MORGAN."

"Of course I will, Jabber," I exclaimed to my four-pawed servitor, that had been earnestly watching as I read the note, and now capered around in great glee while I examined the elegant gift. Stiles Morgan I had met two or three times. He was a master mechanic in a shop where goalones were made. I had visited the shop with Restling and studied the mechanism of the graceful and useful

vehicles that were in all stages of construction there. Stiles showed me a small one-seat affair which he was building for himself. The frame and running parts were of the metallic flux I have already mentioned, but so blended as to look like oxidized copper. The seat about a yard wide was of dark wood highly polished and cushioned in deer skin, or what resembled that kind of leather. I learned afterward that it was a composition of fibrous bark compressed and worked to the degree of softness and flexibility that distinguishes fine deer skin, and that no animal leather was manufactured in the country. Under the seat was the cylinder for the gas, the light metal of which it was made having been tested with a pressure of two hundred and thirty-six pounds. This container when charged would be sufficient for a ride of one hundred and fifty miles. The two back wheels were thirty-two inches in diameter, the front and guiding wheel but twenty-two inches.

The brief inspection then made satisfied me that Stiles had sent me the wagon he had made for his own use, and I could not resist a trial of it, as the gauge indicated an abundant supply of the motive power. So turning over the ring in the guiding handle I drew the goalone out upon the roadway, got in, and glanced at Jabber, who with great delight sprang up beside me. Opening the valve slightly there was an immediate response of the nicely adjusted gearing and almost noiselessly we

ran down to the common road, and in a few moments were going rapidly eastward. No horseman was ever more delighted with the action of a new trotter upon a macadamized turnpike than I was with the smooth, harmonious movement of my autolat. Its prompt answer to every experimental trial, and the evident possibilities of high speed, merely dependent upon extent of pressure, made it appear to me the very acme of carriage design.

Almost unconsciously I turned in the direction of district 14, and coursed to the factory where Morgan was employed. Reining up, so to speak, at the entrance, I alighted and pushed into the building. There was no office through which a visitor must pass, and no signs in prominent view with the intimidating challenge, "No admittance except on business." Going directly into the machine room I saw Stiles operating a lathe at one side. He turned as I entered and seeing me, nodded smilingly. Offering my hand I said, "Stiles, you have done me great pleasure. I scarcely know how to thank you. Your own carriage, too. I shall take the best care I know of it."

"Well, Malcolm, if you are pleased, and I was sure that you would be—that is all I ask. Yet you know that any one here would gladly let you use his goalone."

"Yes, Stiles, I know it well. But I could not help coming to you at once to give you my thanks. It runs as smooth as oil, most beautifully. I am proud

of it. What fittings you turn out! You must use it whenever you care to; I insist upon that as part of the contract."

"Well, Malcolm, as you please; but remember when you need a fresh cylinder you can get it here, or I will give you the pump for recharging if you would like to do that yourself at Jasper's."

"Thank you, Stiles. I should like to do that. I am fond of dabbling with machinery."

"You would make a good Oudemonite, Malcolm," returned Morgan, laughing, "and you may decide to remain with us yet."

Leaving the busy mechanic at his lathe I stepped into the new carriage, and with Jabber alongside, sitting on his tail and grinning with such a stretch of mouth that his face seemed to have no other feature, I rolled back to Bruce's and stalled my new possession in a back angle of the garden house.

Early the next morning before I had risen I heard voices in merry talk under my window. Looking down there was Stella mounted on the new goalone and operating it with the interest of one who has found a thing in the line of his particular fancy. Willis was there, Ellice, and two or three young people of the neighborhood, a group much engaged in discussing the points of the vehicle. Jabber sat up in the fork of a young mahogany tree apparently watchful of the doings. At first I felt a little indignant at the liberty taken with my property, but that feeling soon passed away—for the skill of the

girl in managing the machine and the charming ease of its performance enlisted my admiration, and prompted a hasty finish of toilette that I might go down and join them. When I appeared upon the scene it was the occasion for a salvo of exclamations regarding the perfection of the goalone, and soon I became engaged in a lively discussion of the points new and old of goalones in general and of this one under inspection in particular.

"There is only one thing about it, dear friends," I said, "that seems to me objectionable."

"What can that be, Malcolm?" asked Willis with a shade of reproach in his voice.

"That there is only scant room for two to ride, for I should like to take you all on a little anteprandial round this delightful morning."

"Oh, that would be pleasant! The will for the deed, Malcolm," rejoined young neighbor Searl.

"We are all fully satisfied that the wagon will run admirably," commented Willis. "Stella's proving is quite enough. She saw you come in with it last evening and thought she would give it a trial. Then, too, you may know, Malcolm, that when Stiles Morgan turns out a new three-wheeler everybody expects it to have the latest improvements, and be one of the finest types of vehicle that Oudemont can produce. My little mischief of a sister, too, must let all the neighborhood know about it. Girls will be girls."

"I am glad to have her make the trial," was my

response, looking smilingly at Stella and noting the fine color her brother's playful speech had called to her cheek. "She is such a good driver I must have her company to-day for a run up the country. I need a little more coaching to manage so fine a machine."

"Oh, dear," said Ellice with an air of comic displeasure, "see how I am slighted."

"Don't grieve, fair maid," I ventured in the same light vein. "You shall have your turn to-morrow or when you please."

CHAPTER XII.

THE MINING REGIONS—GOLD AND SILVER.

“BUT my little “cousin” was doomed to wait, for at the breakfast table I found a note from Archbold asking my presence at his house that morning. A trip into the mining district had been projected; a small party made up and the hour of nine set for the start. A large two-seated goalone conveyed the four persons in the company, and covered the forty miles of distance in two hours and a quarter. On the way I was informed that the “works” we would view consisted of old and new cuttings, the old having been opened centuries before by a race that had quite disappeared. The people knew nothing of these mines until after the great upturn, when they were found and their product turned to account. The region reminded me of canyons on a small scale of the Rocky Mountains, especially Colorado, while the richness of deposit exceeded anything I had before taken note of.

Into the crypts and galleries of the old leads we crept by a low narrow fissure in the rock wall, where after lighting lamps we found ourselves in the midst of suggestions of wealth and magnificence that would have fascinated an Aladdin. The rough walls

gleamed with deposits of gold, silver, galena and pyrites. With a small hammer one could knock out fragments of quartzite containing the valuable metal in varied quantity. Great crystals of amber tint and pure white jutted out, the multifold radiance of which was dazzling, while the sharp angles of the bright galena added to the striking novelty of the scene.

In the new workings, that led off from the old by a long natural passage open to the sky, were broad veins of iron mainly of the chromate order, besides great deposits of manganese and other oxides of value in the industries of civilization. Here were men engaged in taking out the ores and reducing the masses to convenient state for transportation and reduction. I noted very soon that the method of working was simple and easy. No low levels demanded shafts or hoisting apparatus. They had merely to break out the ore and load the wagons and run them down an inclined way that had been graded smoothly to the mill and furnaces. The plant for crushing and smelting seemed in every respect complete. Here were produced the combinations or alloys of iron, silver, gold, lead, aluminum, manganese, etc., that were deemed convenient and suitable for the different purposes of the people. Conveniently near to the furnaces were shops with admirable equipment of tools and machinery for working the bars of metal into various articles of larger form, like farm and garden imple-

ments, road-making tools, and other heavy necessities.

This morning's round through the mines, and the shops in which the metals were converted, answered the question often at my tongue's end, why the tables of my new friends were so well furnished with the essentials and conveniences of refined living. I learned then that the yellow and white lines and markings that imparted so much of variety and beauty to their dishes, cups, cutlery and the hundred other accessories of housekeeping were of gold and silver. These metals were to Oudemont eyes not matters of ornament so much as use, because of their ready adaptation to so many purposes, and their freedom from corrosion and change. Obtained in such quantity from the ancient deposits they had evidently lost the value in the esteem of these people, if they ever had it, which the outer world sets upon them. The artist and mechanic found their pleasure and vocation in working them into hundreds of forms responding to the needs and convenience of the people.

What, on my first acquaintance I had thought to be a composition similar to our brass or bronze, so generally was it found in dress and home equipments, proved to be gold or silver in various states of purity. If the pins, buckles, hooks or what not in a woman's dress were of gold they were not affectations for the sake of decoration, because every woman or girl wore them. The men by common

consent used silver or compositions of that metal with aluminum, gold or copper for buttons, buckles, catches, etc. In the matter of design preference or taste was left to the individual. I had worn on my journey southward a pair of sleeve-buttons in gold of oriental design set with small sapphires. These I gave to Stella, because she admired the design—a novelty of course to her. She used them to secure her trouserettes at the ankle. One morning I found on the table of my room a pair of silver clasps set with stones that looked like rubies so much that I was led to wonder if they could be real stones. After my return north Chiffany & Storr informed me that they were true rubies of high value. These clasps I used to secure my knee pants to my stockings and was complimented by Ellice, when she saw them for the first time, upon my “good judgment” in the way I had attached them. Stella had picked these stones up when out on a round with Caroline and Ellice, for the study of minerals, and I learned in my own rambles on the slopes of the ridges and into the mines that there were places where gems of many kinds abounded.

An accident of which I shall speak in a later chapter revealed in a startling fashion the wondrous richness of that country in the “precious things” of ordinary civilization. Of the wealth of the ledges its fine crystals were deemed of better value than its garnets, turquoises, opals, agate, diamonds and fine

rubies, because of their uses for the lenses of eyeglasses, microscopes, telescopes, cameras, etc. Collections of minerals were to be found in the schools, and in many houses, being made by the young folks for pleasure or study. In the museum of natural history the department of geology contained a display of stones which according to the rating of a New York jeweler would be of stupendous value in American dollars.

CHAPTER XIII.

TRADE AND LITERATURE.

IT is *à propos* in this place to mention that such a thing as money did not exist among these people. They made no purchases or sales, as we practice them, in their business relations. There were exchanges constantly of such commodities or products as were needed—or desired by one or another, but no payments in a representative currency or even promises. Once a week a sort of market festival was held in each district, and to this the people resorted. All sorts of articles for family, house, farm, school and other purposes were taken thither by representatives of the families, and “trades” or exchanges were made, it seemed to me, *ad libitum*. It was a charming demonstration of an open reciprocal communism, the affair being more like a social festival, it appeared to me, where any one was free to help himself, than a concourse for business transactions. Yet I found that a system of fairness and mutual understanding was generally observed by all who took part in the market doings.

Once in three months a general fair was held in which the entire community participated. Then the representatives of the districts brought for ex-

hibition their best consummations. Meetings were held in which affairs that interested a part or the whole were discussed by both men and women. Here was the field in which propositions from any source were announced and their utility or expediency examined. The suggestions obtained in these mutual exchanges of view and experience were preserved by the district councillors and exploited in their home centers according to occasion. In a country provided as this was with easy routes of communication between the districts nothing of importance could happen without its being bulletined speedily, and thus carried to the knowledge of every house; yet at these assemblies improvements in industrial methods, new inventions, products of domestic skill, novel preparations of food, charts and drawings for educational purposes, pictures in oil, water color, ink, etc., and new books that had been written or finished in the interval since the last fair had a freshness of interest to all who attended.

LITERATURE AND AUTHORSHIP.

The Oudemontians were not prolific as writers, and there was no great demand for the novel. At the one fair of the sort I attended I saw only three books, one in manuscript and two in print, of a professed fiction character. Glancing over the leaves I was soon convinced that their authors

would not obtain much notice in my own country, because of the regard given to the ethical spirit of their plot and incidents, "Too finical and tame" would be the criticism of our reviewers, or "Better fitted for the Sunday school than the general public." I had scanned some of the story books on the tables of certain houses, and certainly failed to find much of the "dramatic" element. There was no want of tenderness and passion—love-making, etc., but the irregularities, infelicities, stratagems and infidelities that constitute so much of the charm of great authors among us were evidently out of vogue here. The little by-plays of mischief were so innocent, the mistakes of a lover in his infatuation were so natural, the conversation so open and sincere and at the same time so refined by a delicate taste, that I was inclined to think my time almost wasted in their perusal. Yet, I was convinced that such books could lie about and be open to the curious inspection of girl or boy and they would read in them nothing of a nature to stimulate a vicious thought or feed a prurient fancy. Love was treated by the novelist as a natural instinct of the human organism, and its development in the relations of man and woman traced according to the differential aspects of individual character, as one would analyze the growth of a flower. At the same time the writer imparted something of romanticism to his incidents, and from the sources of his habitual integrity gave a moral coloring to the conduct and

expression of his personages that inspired thought of a pure and sweet tenor.

The philosophical and essay department of their literature was fairly sustained, as might be expected from the high ethical tone of the people. The reasoning and speculation of the writers were cheerful and hopeful. Nowhere found I anything morbid or depressing. The rueful, forbidding predictions of a Schopenhauer, or Saltus had no place in the library of Oudemont, for their December dreariness would have been totally inconsistent with the June-like warmth and cheer of a people whose convictions moral and religious were so strongly knit to a Providence that I thought well characterized for them in the ninety-first Psalm of David.

I did not hear of any censorship over literature or press, but was satisfied that authors here as elsewhere were voluntarily or unconsciously subject to the influence of public sentiment, as much as influenced by their own moral convictions.

It need not be supposed that the circumscribed geography of these writers tended to render their work similar and repetitive. Such was by no means the case. Each book that I saw had its identity, and was striking in point of character expression; each member in the plot having sharply distinguished features of action. I could not avoid the impression that the author was drawing from living models, and saw that he exhibited a mastery of the interoperation of faculty that was far from

common among the writers of my nation and of Europe. Yet such capacity of representation was accounted for clearly enough. First, these people lived and acted naturally; hypocrisy and evasion appeared unknown to them. Second, with their methods of education was incorporated the study of mind and character, assisted by that remarkable scientific proving, the breath plate. They were therefore practiced physiognomists, and read their "confirmations strong," for inferences drawn from eye, nose and lip, in the chemical reactions of the "phænic solution," as it was called. Third, these writers were very deliberate in setting their thoughts on paper. From the dates on the title pages I concluded that the most fertile of them did not give a book to the Oudemon public at shorter intervals than five years. I did not wonder therefore that their works had a lasting quality; were never dismissed with a single hasty perusal.

Each of the districts had its library, situated near the school center. Opportunity to examine several of the collections showed a common plan of arrangement, and surprised me by the number of paraphrases or translations of authors reputable in the world without. History, science, art, ethics, mechanics, social economics were well represented. But few of the novelists we admire had place on the shelves. The poets, however, mainly English, German and Italian were there, but for the most part in abridged editions profusely annotated by

home editors. The labor, intelligence and good judgment shown in these appeared to me quite remarkable at first, and yet when I learned that writers here were estimated by the thoroughness, truth and utility of their writing, and not according to the fertility of their conceptions and the rapidity of production I was inclined to regard them as but the consistent outcomes of the thought and time given them. The most of the story or romance titles were of a nature relating to the early history of the country, and I could well believe that the incidents dressed in picturesque language were entirely true of the men and women who constituted the first two or three colony groups.

To my inquiry it was answered that there was no special literary class, no "blue stockings" in Oudemon; any one could write who felt the drawing of the muse, and they who exhibited talent in the use of language as writers or speakers were encouraged to practice and develop their powers. The district bulletins were the media of publication of sketches, poems, articles, etc., of the younger authors, while at the social gatherings the mature and experienced read or exploited in address their later thought, and discussed the literary topics that obtained common attention.

A LITERARY DEFECT (?)

I noted one seeming defect in the library col-

lections, that there were no theological treatises, or Bible commentaries, while of books essentially religious in tone there were many. Expressing my surprise to one of the older men he told me that the founder of the colony brought no books of the kind into the country, and was of the opinion that they inspired too much controversy, and thus contributed to dissension and strife among people who should be united in so important a matter as belief and trust in the infinite God and Father of Men. "The discussion of credal propositions," this elder went on to say, "had split Christendom into a thousand sects or phases of religious opinion, and had any good come out of it? The contentions and quarrels of people who professed to be followers of the Master of truth and life were unending, and embittered class against class, community against community. From religion men thought to obtain peace, sympathy and happiness; instead, they drew enmity, rancor and malice. Certainly Christ, as exemplifying God's purpose and dealing toward men, never intended that belief in Him should divide mankind, but unite them in a common brotherhood. The teaching of His gospel emphasizes this, and its terms are so clear as to require no ponderous volumes for their interpretation."

CHAPTER XIV.

RELIGION MADE MUTUAL.

IN my talks with the older men and women it was evident that they were not bound by any dogmatic rule or opinion on points of religious practice, but their common agreement seemed to me remarkable in accepting one great Overruler and Guide in the universe. The New Testament was their Compendium of Faith, deference being given especially to the teaching and life of Christ as the model for their following. There was no priest or clerical class among them, the older men and women being given precedence at their meetings for Scripture reading and exercises of devotion. No set discourse or sermon was delivered; instead a serious conversation occupying an hour or so engaged attention. The question or topic for this conversation was suggested at the meeting before it was taken up, and also announced early in the district bulletin. In the home group or hacienda talks on religious matters were of almost daily occurrence, and at table meals were prefaced by an invocation of divine blessing, the members of the household even to the children taking turn in the brief appeal.

Further, a practice had grown up with them in later years that seemed to be especially beautiful, although it might remind of Oriental formalism. Every day at five o'clock or rather seventeen hours, a low toned bell was sounded from every district tower, and the people, wherever they might be at once bowed with uncovered head, and slowly recited aloud the prayer given by Jesus to his disciples. The mechanic laid down his tool, the gardener stopped in the row, the student or writer put aside his book or pen, the housewife ceased to sew or knit, the man on the road stopped his wagon, the children turned from their play, and scarcely had the mellow clang of the thrice-struck bell died away ere all were in reverent attitude, and the grand words of the grandest of petitions in harmonious intonation rolled through the quiet air.

IN A RELIGIOUS GATHERING.

At home I was connected with old St. George's, often attending in company with my mother, the services presided over by the Reverend Doctor Sylvanus Fichet, a representative of the broadest cult of that much phased division of the Protestant body. The well intoned responses and excellently rendered music were, I think, appreciated, if not the brief discourse and formal pronouncement of the prayers always; yet like Jim Bludso "I didn't go much on religion" as it was commonly observed in my circle of acquaintance. Among these people, however,

I found myself taking part in their devotional practices almost unconsciously. In spite of the evolutionary sophists man has a spiritual side by natural endowment and when appealed to normally there is a response of religious feeling, that can scarcely be repressed by any materialistic notions that one may have imbibed. When a guest of the Romans one might be expected to do after their manner, whether or not a custom accorded with one's conviction. Here in Oudemon the earnest, open sincerity of religious and moral life struck home at once, and challenged imitation of the habits and practices of the people so forcibly that I did not spend much time in reflection on their necessity or reasonableness. They were so consistent with the prevalent spirit that I was soon persuaded of their propriety and excellence, and sacrificed no personal belief or scruple in their observance.

The first day of the week was the customary time for gathering in the halls for the religious conference. I say halls, but a large court would be more accurate, as the assembly was in the open, unless the weather were rainy or windy. Each district had its place of meeting and the assembly being always large it was divided into sections, after a general opening in which the people sang, and such announcements were made as were of common interest. At this general opening people greeted each other in cordial, fraternal style and exchanged remarks concerning family affairs, and

inquired about the absent. At one of the conferences a brother, whom I had not met before, said:

“Perhaps our friend from the far North would like to ask a question.” As he spoke he turned and looked toward me. The people, however, instead of following his motion as by a common impulse and craning their necks to obtain a view of me, continued looking at him. The speaker’s kind manner encouraged me to find voice in a query that had been running in my mind that morning as I rode toward the unroofed temple of worship. Thanking the worthy speaker for his attention, I remarked that I should ask a question in the hope that it would not be out of place there, and that my candor must be my excuse for what might seem to many the utterance of a very simple matter, and which, nevertheless, involved much of concern to me, whose spiritual associations had been from childhood of a very different character from theirs. As I spoke every eye now turned toward me. Over at the right leaning against a small tulip tree stood Ellice; glancing that way I noticed that the girl was regarding me with face half averted, yet the flush on her cheek and the parted lips were indicative of her close attention to what I was saying.

“Down here in this charming reserve of nature,” I continued, “you, my friends, have made progress in things both material and spiritual. With a beginning of singular auspices you have been wise and fortunate in putting away many influences of a de-

pressing and injurious nature that are tolerated or even cultivated in the great North. You have protected the simple and pure, and have grown into a condition of mental harmony and strength, of robust and elastic vitality, of psychic and spiritual susceptibility and expansion that would rejoice the heart of every one in the great outer world who believes earnestly in the upward trend of human nature, when the environment intimates that the community truly desires to grow into a higher sphere of being. I believe from what I see that your development has been due greatly to the ingrafting of religious truth and practice in your every-day habits."

There was a general nodding of heads at this statement, many of the elders saying: "Yes, you are right, brother Malcolm." I went on:

"One could scarcely fail in the inference who knows aught of the effect of a sincere religious emotion upon character. Well, am I to infer that you owe your present uplift to any special revelation of the Divine will, or simply to a powerful leadership whose influence still remains as an abiding element in your souls, and is working out its holy and wonderful evolution in your common life?"

These remarks were followed by a profound silence that lasted fully three minutes, when a deep, penetrating voice at some distance from where I stood broke upon the ear. Turning in its direction

I saw that the speaker was, like the other, quite unknown, but, from his white hair, one of the Nestors of the State.

“I may be permitted, dear friends and children,” he said, “to answer our stranger friend, for you know I was one of the early-born after the settlement made here by our fathers and mothers. We have had no special revelation, aside from the beautiful and lovely results of our effort to follow the teaching of this lamp of life” (taking from his pocket an old, worn copy of the Bible that I was sure had never been printed in Oudemont). “We have had no great leader aside from the divine one, who came so many generations ago to disclose the will of God to a whole world. If the outcome in the order of our community and people from an effort to worship the Creator and Father of the Universe in all simplicity and sincerity, and to join an earnest obedience to his benevolent law in our active life, in our relations to each other, be what our young brother terms an evolution, let it be so. Yet what is our condition to-day, children, but that which this manual of righteousness and hope declares shall and must be as the necessary result of obedience to the will of our Father, Infinite and Gracious.

“I remember how the excellent man, John Roser, who was, you all know, in the first company that crossed the broad river, and ascended to this smiling level, was accustomed in his last years to ad-

dress us in the words of St. John: 'Little children, love one another,' and it was little by little that the spirit of his admonition took possession of our hearts. Especially after that great and strange convulsion that isolated us from the world—and I was a mere youth then—did the truth and force of this counsel become clear and drew us closer. We studied together the lessons and example of the Master and found them full of this principle, and its trial in our every-day conduct realized the promises He has made of blessing. Could a foundation for happy and contented living be broader than that in which the appreciative practice of brotherhood among men is hinged upon a strong belief in the fatherhood of our God? This is the warm atmosphere in which we have come to live, with its sweet influence to warm our hearts to the habitual expression of kind words, generous feelings and warm welcomes for each other. Ah, we are not schooled in doctrinal distinctions; nor do we wish to be; it is union, agreement, mutual support that are dear to us, and we are content to rest upon the great truth of the one Almighty Father of our spirits and His regard for His trusting children. Have we not prospered, dear friends, in everything desirable by adopting this?" A loud burst of approval answered the elder's question. "And are there many among us who would exchange the life of mutual sympathy and interest here, the calm and happy current of industry and affectionate companionship, for

the uncertain, hasty and irregular ways of the world beyond those ridges?"

"No, no, no," came in prolonged and emphatic repetition from the attentive throng, while eyes filled with tenderness and hands clasped hands in earnest clasp. My own eyes became thick with moisture as I listened to the sage, and emotions were stirred that no other assembly had before awakened. I could not refrain from exclaiming: "I am answered, venerable father and Christian apostle; you have given me a complete demonstration." The next moment two warm hands clasped mine, and Ellice spoke: "Dear Malcolm, you know now what we are like, don't you?" There was a tone of yearning in that voice that went to my heart's depth, and I longed to return the sweet pressure, but in that atmosphere my conscience was quickened to a strong expression of honesty. I could not do that which I believed to be unreasonably if not clearly wrong, I could not encourage feelings, however delightful, that would not find realization. Only sincerity and frankness should mark my conduct thereafter in Oudemon. Was I not there on honor? Looking in the face of the beautiful young woman whose breast undulated with the fervor of her emotion, I replied:

"Yes, Ellice, if all here are like you what a heaven it must be into which I have fallen." Then, with a gentle pressure I released my hands and turned to others who were near and who had already greeted me.

CHAPTER XV.

A WEAPON OF DESTRUCTION.

WHILE reading in my room after breakfast, a few days later, I heard confused cries and the rustle of wings as of many birds in great excitement. Looking toward a window, I saw a dozen or more flit by, and was about to throw aside the book and go to the window, when Stella burst in.

“Cousin Malcolm, a great, monstrous bird has entered our district and is flying this way. Come right down, will you not?”

Going down, I found most of the family on the grounds in the rear of the house. To my look of inquiry Jasper replied: “We have just heard that an oura has entered the country, coming down from the southeast. Once in a while a visit of the kind occurs. It is a very large, powerful and rapacious creature, and might do much damage, especially by killing hundreds of our birds, if not driven away or destroyed soon. You see how they are flying in this direction; that shows that the unwelcome visitor is heading toward us.”

The bird tumult seemed to increase. I never saw before or since such a panic; it was a veritable hurricane of flying feathers. Orioles, toucans, finches,

ravens, humming birds, parrots, swallows, tanagers, francolins, or pheasants, and others I could not name mingling their brilliant colors in a flashing mesh and uttering their peculiar notes of alarm and warning. Multitudes had already settled in the trees and shrubbery of the grounds, evidently expecting safety in nearness to their human friends.

“You think, then, Jasper, that it will come near us?” I asked, while studying the bird panorama.

“In all probability. This visitor is very bold. Although several have been killed, they do not seem to learn much from experience, for two or three times a year one ventures down. They fly well in the air, swooping down to strike their prey, and it does not seem to matter if there are men near by. One has been known to attempt to strike a child, and when intent upon its quarry will fight a dozen men. We value our birds highly, as you know, and so endeavor to protect them from their enemies, but such a creature as this is dangerous in other respects and must be treated as a public enemy.”

“What are you going to do, Jasper?”

“I think we shall leave that to Willis.”

Turning to the young man, I saw now that he held in one hand what appeared to be a rod of polished metal a yard or so long, about an inch in diameter, but on examination I found it to be a tube with one end expanded and flattened, but closed, and so molded as to fit the shoulder. Near the middle of the tube was a button-like projection, and near this

an adjustable or sliding handle. On the whole, it was an odd looking article, a sort of gun, I suspected, but quite without the menacing look of our civilized rifles and fowling pieces.

"Do you expect to do anything with that little affair, Willis?" I asked. "You ought to have one of our revolving or magazine guns."

He laughed: "Well, Malcolm, I shall do the best I can with this little affair."

"Is it loaded?"

"Yes."

Taking from his pocket a cartridge-like cylinder about four inches long, he continued: "This will stop the fellow, probably, in his bold career, if the one in the tube—we call it 'impeller'—misses."

Examining the cartridge for a moment, it appeared to be of thin metal filled with a light substance, as the whole could not have weighed more than two ounces. One end was rounded, the other flat, with a small aperture in the center. I was examining this cartridge, when Jasper said quietly: "There!" raising his hand in a southerly direction. Handing the cartridge to Willis, I turned and saw through the openings of the trees what to my eyes was a great bird indeed. Apparently he was at an elevation of two hundred feet, so that the taller trees of the region were for the most part cleared as he came on, moving easily, the even sweeps of the great wings impelling him with astonishing speed. The blue-brown and gray feathers of his

head shone in the sunlight as he sailed majestically on, the serpent-like head turning now this side and then that, as if on the alert for a quarry. It was not more than two minutes from my first view when he had swooped overhead, shooting downward as if he had marked his prey a little beyond our station. Willis at the exclamation of father Bruce had raised the tube to his shoulder and aimed it at the bird, following its movement, sportsmanlike, as he could over the trees. Suddenly a low snap, an instant later an explosion, with a burst of flame and white smoke that seemed to envelop the bird and quickly cleared away. A faint scream of rage and pain followed, a scuffling of wings and feathers and a heavy fall upon the graveled roadside.

“No need of a second, my son,” broke in the father, as we all hastened to see the result of the shot. There lay the ruins of a great bird of the condor species that must have been the match for an unarmed man in a fight. His feathers were almost destroyed, the skin at parts burnt to a cinder; head, neck and limbs torn and twisted into a mesh of flesh and bone.

“You made short work of the intruder, Willis,” I ventured in my first surprise. “A battle howitzer-firing shrapnel could not have been more thorough. It must be a very destructive explosive that is secreted in the cartridge you use.”

“Yes, something like the composition used in the mine blasts, cousin; but quicker in action. In fact,

I made a little mistake about distance. You see this sliding pin?"—showing me the fresh cartridge—"by adjusting this we set the moment of explosion. You notice the cross lines along the track the pin travels? Each one means the one-hundredth of a second, and as the average flight of a cartridge like this with the pressure given in the tube is three thousand feet in a second, for three and a half seconds I can set the time for the explosion in accordance with the distance of the object. I set the cartridge this time at eight, intending to fire when the bird was about 250 feet distant. He must have been 265. Yet, as the explosive matter of the bolt usually fills a space of thirty feet in diameter, its effect was sufficient to kill him in a second or two."

Taking the tube in my hands, I said: "This is somewhat on the principle of an air gun, I suspect."

"Yes, Malcolm, as you think; only the earth gas is used, because it expands with much greater force, besides developing heat enough to ignite the matter in the cartridge which sets off the explosive composition."

"Is that anything like dynamite?"

"Analogous, but a mixture of salts and inflammable liquid much less dangerous to handle, and really, I think, more powerful when exploded."

"It is indeed, cousin Willis, the most destructive thing I ever saw, and yet the cartridge is innocent looking enough. What an acquisition the knowledge of its properties would be to our Government

at home, both on the score of economy and as a means of defence or offence in war! Have your people ever had any trouble with your neighbors?"

DIFFERENCES OF POLICY, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE.

Willis looked at me in a curious fashion. We were alone there by the roadside, the others of the party having returned to the house, taking the dead bird away with them. At length he said:

"I don't remember, or know, of any trouble with our neighbors, Malcolm. When our forefathers and foremothers came here they had already obtained a grant of territory from the Portuguese, and besides, they purchased from the native Indians all the land and more now under our control. Before the great upheaval of the ridges, our historians say, our difficulties were mostly with the wild beasts and the primitive rudeness of the land."

"Well, I must insist that with such a weapon as that in the hands of active, skilful men like you, Willis, no enemy could stand before you. A knowledge of its construction and of the manufacture of such cartridges as it throws with so much velocity and to distances so accurately measured——"

"Ten thousand yards and more——"

"Would be worth millions to any man in my country."

"Would you care to know about these things, Malcolm, with such an idea of using them?" in-

quired the young fellow, a deeply serious look coming upon his face.

I laughed: "No, Willis; no, indeed. I would not carry such a horrible secret home—horrible, you know, I mean in the sense of its employment to destroy my fellow men—however much it might be valued by our Government. I am not a friend to war or militarism. There are many statesmen among us, however, who profess to think that big armies and great guns preserve the world's peace."

"It must be strange argument, Malcolm, that supports such a view, and only the argument of force and oppression. I have heard that in your country, where much claim is made to popular freedom, and in Europe also, there are many practices that serve to make the most precious thing to man—life—cheap and inconsequent. Think of your political contests, sectional quarrels, social and individual habits, diseases, customs and general opinions that increase so amazingly your mortality. We can scarcely believe the reports that come to us, or comprehend the intelligence of your people with respect to life, so easily on occasion does murder, suicide and death seem to occur. I hope, dear cousin, it is far from true what I have heard in this line."

The earnestness of the young man, several years my junior, impressed me strongly.

"I regret to say, Willis, that you do not overstate the facts. In our country an amazing anomaly stands prominently in view. On the one hand, so-

ciety is seen going to great lengths in caring for the young and old, charitably and officially maintaining a great system of public education, providing hospitals and numerous institutions for the sick and poor and homeless, doing everything suggested by science and philanthropy to promote the health and growth of the young and the comfort of the old, no matter what the expense and trouble; and on the other hand permitting and in divers ways fostering many abuses and malign influences that prey upon health and morals, and directly or indirectly degrade and kill vast numbers."

"I have heard Archbold talk of his experiences abroad, Malcolm, and it has astonished us that your wise and great men—you have many of them, certainly—do not join to suppress the evils your people suffer. Archbold noted that your best people appeared to admire greatly men whose chief distinction was war and to manage expeditions that were intended to carry death and destruction into countries and among people that were much weaker than yours. I have heard that your science and invention that concerned weapons for the wholesale killing of human beings received more consideration and reward than any other kind of mental work and industry. How strange this is! How very remarkable, when you have the same Master who came to teach man how to live, and who emphasized the value of life in many ways for usefulness, growth of the soul and happiness."

Wondering if this young fellow were but a sample of the junior population of the country, I remarked absently:

“You have obtained your information, then, in that way, Willis?”

“Yes, cousin; our Archbold is one of the few who care to go out of Oudemon, and he does so to study foreign countries and find what may be of use to us.”

“I am thinking that you do not get much——”

“Oh, yes, some things are reported that we find really valuable. The composition of dynamite, for instance, was learned not long ago, and our chemists have improved upon it and obtained the substances we use for mining and other purposes. Then we have gotten ideas in education, in agriculture, in our manufactures of cloth, and so on.”

“But, Willis, while you acknowledge indebtedness to us for one thing or another, you have made great advances for yourselves, and I think really outdo us in most of those things that we take pride in.”

“Archbold says that your people, cousin Malcolm, have grand ideas and purposes in various lines, but do not carry them all out, especially the best of them that have relation to the advancement of the community in moral conduct and right views of life. Ideas and propositions having reference to science, business, trade, political expansion, gain and individual importance absorb attention, and great efforts

are made to put them in practice. Thus, some of your people accumulate immense stores of what you call wealth, and control great tracts of land, while the masses are kept poor and their morals degraded or neglected. Oh, if they would only introduce the Royal Law and the practices that naturally flow from it, how soon there would come a change, and the injustice, vice and misery, so widespread, would soon begin to disappear."

"Your Royal Law may operate wonderfully down here, my dear Willis, but among us no idealistic theories could have effect. Our legislators and economists would sneer at any attempt to introduce a system of ethics like yours."

"Why, Malcolm," returned the young man, his fine eyes sparkling, "are not our people of the same race-stock as yours? And *our* grandfathers were idealists, but practical, solid willed men."

"And very happily caught on a principle that in its application has turned out most successfully. I should like to know, Willis, more about the working of your declaration of rights or this Royal Law. Well, Jabber, what now?"

My four-armed servant had been jerking at my coat just then, and, turning to him, found that he had a folded paper in one paw, which he held up, the usual preposterous grin illuminating his wrinkled features.

Opening the missive, I read aloud:

“A few days since our brother Malcolm intimated a wish to visit the House of Hope; if he will meet me at the twin bay tree, near the council hall of district seventeen, at ten hours, I will pilot him to that resting place of our happy ones, who await the final restoration, as I have occasion to visit friends in the adjoining district twenty-one.

“ARCHBOLD.”

“It is time you were on the way, cousin. Let me fetch up your goalone while you get ready.”

“Thank you, my dear boy. I’ll fix up a little and be down in a minute,” and off I rushed to do the necessary for the journey.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE MAUSOLEUM.

ON a natural mound stood this House of Hope, a great building for Oudemon, 125 feet in diameter and 85 feet in height to the deep frieze that imparted a Doric effect to the massive wall of concrete blocks. At the height of ten feet this wall was pierced by a row of circular windows three feet in diameter, set at a distance of about fifteen feet apart. Forty feet up, or nearly midway, was another series of windows, diamond in shape and three feet in central breadth. Another series of openings a few feet below the frieze ran around the structure; these were oval in form, the short or horizontal breadth being five feet. Two porticoes reared on the east and west sides, with Doric columns supporting roofs thirty feet high over platforms twenty-five feet in breadth and forty feet long, gave dignity to the wide archways that formed the entrances. There were no doors.

Passing in, I found a spacious room centrally situated, the coolness of which in contrast to the warm outside air was marked. Chairs and benches of tulip wood and mahogany stood about. On one side a low table, massively built and finely carved,

intimated some form of ceremonial. The shape of this room was oval, the long diameter at right angles to the line of entrance. Numerous openings gave admission to broad passages that radiated in as many directions toward the outer wall. These passages were open to the roof, which was constructed of a series of diaphragms, one above the other, until a wide central disk surmounted them all. The lower margin of each diaphragm extended over its next neighbor below, a space being left between of several feet, thus affording light and ventilation in addition to the windows. As one stood in a passage and looked upward he saw three windows of different form break the line of wall, and overhead he saw the central diaphragm in full view, its polished metal glistening in the light and being pierced by a large stellar opening glazed with immense sheets of blue-white mica. The effect was decidedly impressive.

On each side of a passage built of composite metal in heavy open or grill work was a line of stall or cell-like spaces two feet or more wide and seven feet long and perhaps two feet high. Tier after tier of these rose to the roof, all being accessible by galleries of open framework set at convenient elevations. An aromatic odor pervaded the building. This was the mausoleum of Oudemon, where the dead were placed for final rest.

I had entered the silent building alone, for Restling had dropped me at the entrance, saying:

"I leave you, Malcolm, to make your own inspection and form your own conclusions. You will probably find the warden ere long. Expect me back in the course of two hours."

I did not find the warden, and it was half an hour, perhaps, ere he appeared, so that the great House of Hope was my possession during that time, and I wandered through the passages, curiously studying the arrangements and fittings that on every hand evinced the interest and good sense of this people in caring for the bodies of their departed friends. At first the thought of cremation was suggested when I encountered the spicy odor, but a glimpse of certain stalls proved to me that a different plan of disposal was followed here. The warden explained it.

The body of the departed was wrapped in a fire-resisting cloth that had been soaked previously in a composition of disinfectants and fragrant gums, and after the usual ceremonial was deposited upon the grating in a special stall at one end of the main hall. Under the body was laid billets of odorous wood that burned slowly and with little flame. The heat and vapor gradually dried the tissues of the dead without destroying their relations and without the production of offensive gases. It was a method of dessication that did not cause the ordinary effects of dessication as known to us. After this process the body was laid in its chosen crypt.

The warden drew from one of the stalls the mummy-like fold of a body that had lain there five

years. It was that of a relative, a cousin of his mother. Carefully loosening the cloth enfolding the head, a face was disclosed that startled me by its naturalness. The complexion had darkened, but the skin under the drying treatment had shrivelled little and had tightened over the bones so as to preserve much of the old contour and expression. It reminded me of leaves I had seen in the forest that had dried up, after falling, without turning yellow or losing much of their glossy smoothness. In some instances, the old custodian said, an examination of bodies that had been there twenty years revealed a state of almost equal preservation. At the head of each stall containing an inmate was a tablet giving name, age and some lines or a verse descriptive of his or her character and relation in life. In a niche of the building was filed a record of the events and design relating to its construction, and also a register of its peaceful residents from the time of the first deposit.

I should mention that on the wall inclosing the central room or place of ceremonial there were a great many metal tablets, with inscriptions deeply engraved or carved in relief. These were either memorials of men and women specially beloved by the people, or quotations from the wisdom of the ages, bearing upon life in its relations to God and man, the sentiment of hope and cheer being everywhere marked. Among these I noted the following:

PRAISE the LORD, my soul,
and all that is within me
Praise HIS holy Name!

Rejoice in the LORD always;
and again I say REJOICE!

Children, continue the good
reputation of the dead with surviving GLORY.

The voice of Joy and HEALTH
is in the dwellings of the righteous.

When men are FRIENDS
there is no need of JUSTICE.

SING, ye Heaven, be joyful, O earth!

He who does wrong,
does wrong against HIMSELF.

One tablet in a conspicuous place, being set in the center of the broad wall and composed of letters of great size, evidently beaten out of gold, and so well polished as to be read easily from the most distant part of the chamber, was this:

What doth the LORD
require of THEE
but to do JUSTLY, and to love MERCY,
And to walk HUMBLY
with thy GOD?

A later visit for the purpose enabled me to make notes of such features that were interesting to a mere curiosity hunter, and which, I am sure, would be useful to the statistician. I learned then from the warden that the mausoleum was built forty-six years after the first settlement of Oudemon, and contained 10,605 bodies. There had been a remarkable decline in the death rate of the people during the past fifty years, although the showing of the early decades was a much smaller percentage than that of my own city, the management of whose sanitary affairs was in charge of a much applauded and certainly quite officious Board, supposed to be "non-partisan" in politics because its members received no salary. As nearly as I could estimate the death rate for the ten years just past had not exceeded three per cent. for the whole period, and this was made up almost entirely of persons over eighty years of age. There were two years when the percentage in certain districts was greater, for a reason mentioned later. The number of children on the list was so amazingly small that I asked the warden where the children were buried or entombed.

He replied: "Why, here, my young friend."

"But they are not all registered, then, I suppose?"

"Yes, certainly, Malcolm; but, as you see, the proportion is quite small. Our children as a rule live and grow up. We have no sicknesses or epi-

denics to kill them in infancy, as was much the case before the settlement and before our people had improved the country and become established in the habits that we now practice. Our younger married people are so well and so systematic in their domestic affairs that we expect their children to be well born and to grow like the fledgelings of our birds into robust maturity."

"Your families, kind warden, are certainly not remarkable for size, as a rule, yet if all the children live your population constantly increases."

"Yes, probably fast enough, all things considered, Malcolm. But have you noticed that any of our people appear to be discontented as mothers or fathers?"

"No; far from it. On the contrary, I have never seen families where so much enjoyment was taken in themselves. On that account I have wondered that you do not have more little ones toddling about."

"Well, my dear friend from the North, we probably look at the subject of parentage from a different point of view than your people do. We do love and treasure our children, and that very fact leads us to consider motherhood in a light that imparts a high responsibility to the relation. Our women, indeed, have more to say about marriage than our men. We think that only fair to them as prospective mothers. So, when one marries, it is commonly understood that she is perfectly satisfied with the man

of her choice; and then, as regards having a child, it is for her to decide when it shall be. The many considerations that enter into so important a matter are seriously looked at by both husband and wife."

"Ah, warden, we conduct things of this kind in a very different fashion. Our men still think themselves the paramount authority."

"So I have been told, Malcolm, and that parentage is often a so-called 'accident' in your well-bred society. With us there are no accidents, you know," the old man went on, a suspicious twinkle of cynicism in his eye. "Well, a child is wanted, and the expectant parents desire that it shall be a strong, active product of their best life, a joy and credit to them in early years, a companion and help in its full growth, and a survivor to perpetuate the family stock with even a better quality of capacity and endurance. Children born and grown in this way are not likely to be numerous, my young friend."

"No, the lion has but few cubs, warden, but they are lions. So it is analogously with you Oudemonites. Few children, yet beautiful and strong and joy-giving, and endowed with so much buoyant life as to awaken little thought of their passing away ere the springtime had set the bud for the blossom."

"I remember well an incident," musingly went on my elderly companion, "that occurred when I was quite a youngster—not over twenty—I am eighty-

seven now. I was a delicate boy for an Oudemonite even then; my mother was a weakly woman always, yet lived to be seventy-eight; and I was born a year or two after my father came down here from your State. Mother, I believe, picked up considerably in strength after getting settled in the new home, but I had weak lungs, supposed to be inherited from mother. Her father and two brothers died of what they called consumption, and mother was so weak at the time she left the old house near Albany to travel so far that father was called very cruel to pack her off just to die. Yet, you see, the change proved good for her; she lived nearly forty years after that.

“Well, my boy, as I was going to tell you when I began, I was about twenty when a child was still-born in the Tolly house, not far from ours. This caused a deal of excitement among the people——”

“Indeed, my excellent warden!—a very common occurrence where I live. How did it happen?”

“Mother Tolly never could get used to the monkeys. She did not like them from the first. To be sure, we did not understand them as well then as we do now, and could not prevent them from doing some mischief in one way or another. Now they are so well trained as to be of use in many ways, you know.”

“You have seen my faithful Jabber, perhaps, warden?”

“No, but I can vouch for him. Like most of

them, he was bred, I suppose, in the family where you live. Educated stock, you see! But, going on with my story, if you're not tired of it, boy?"

"No, no, good sir—go on."

"Well, as I was saying, we were only beginning then to learn the value of the lively little chaps, and there were not half a dozen families in our district who kept them. Now, to come to the point: mother Tolly was expecting another child. She was feeling very well and had gone into the garden to look around. That spring had not been as wet as usual, and we had done a little irrigation. While she was there a neighbor's monkey slyly crept up behind mother Tolly and sprang upon her arm. Surprise and fright caused a premature birth, and the good woman was a long time getting over it. Since that, over sixty years, you see, I don't believe more than two such deaths have happened in all the country."

"Impossible! What was done with the rascally monkey?"

"We made him a public example that some folks thought too severe, but I believe it had a good effect."

"What was it, warden? I should like to know what kind of discipline would be of any use to the frisky tribe."

"Well, at first, my boy, the people in our district and others almost decided to expel the whole race from the country—corrall them, so to speak, and

put them over the ridge; but my father advised a different course. He believed that the monkey could be made very useful by training, and quite well-behaved, also, in time. So he suggested that all the monkeys for miles around should be brought to a certain place on a set day, soon after the accident to mother Tolly. At that time he had Yep, the mischievous offender, brought into the center of the assembly, and bound him by the four legs to two youngsters. All the other monkeys were roped to other trees in full sight of Yep. Then neighbor Ambrose Glind, a man who had a very stern sense of justice, whipped the beast severely with a strap until he howled terribly. It was a pitiful sight. All the other monkeys howled in chorus and strained on their fastenings, and got on their knees to their masters, as if fearful they should be treated the same way. After the whipping Ambrose talked to Yep about what he had been whipped for, and ordered him never to leave the home grounds without permission; if he did, he would be whipped and thrown out of the country. The owners of the other monkeys spoke to their poor animals in the same strain.

“Well, I don’t know how it was,” said the old man with a laugh, “but Yep never went out of the home bounds after that, and his owner declared no child could be more submissive. Besides, the punishment had a good effect upon the monkeys generally in making them tractable.”

In a wide recess I had noted a large silver plate set in the wall, with the inscription:

“THROUGH HIS CHASTENING.

PRAISED BE HIS NAME!”

On both sides of this were rows of stalls, with the customary tablets, giving names and the dates of decease. There were groups of these tablets bearing the same date and district. My curiosity was aroused by this peculiar arrangement and by the large memorial plate, and I had determined to inquire into the meaning of such a distribution, so at this point of our conversation I remarked:

“My dear venerable, over there in the southeast there is a sort of mortuary chapel, by itself, with an inscription that I would like you to explain for me.”

“Ah, my good boy,” replied he, gravely, the tears starting in his eyes, “that is our constant reminder that we are subject to the unexpected woful, like all the rest of humankind. Now and then in some part of our land there comes a sudden visitation—a tornado, or waterburst—that is terribly destructive to houses, fields and life. All our science is powerless against it, although in some cases warning has been given a little time in advance by our sky observers. Coming from above, this storm swoops down, tears into fragments everything it strikes. You know the effect of those terrible, revolting winds?”

"Yes, indeed, warden, I have seen their effects in the Antilles."

"The worst of their havoc is, of course, upon life and limb. Three years ago a cyclone and rain-storm fell in district nineteen one most beautiful spring day—oh, with such awful suddenness; and in two minutes or less dashed into splinters four houses and all the outlying buildings, and wasted gardens and groves for miles. Fourteen persons were killed outright and eleven wounded and maimed."

"Yes; I noticed the group of tablets with that number of deaths inscribed."

"So, you must see, Malcolm, life with us is not altogether a bed of roses. He disciplines us in His own blessed way, lest we shall become too vain and self-satisfied, and perhaps fall into habits that might gradually weaken and destroy us."

Not many days afterward I visited district nineteen in company with Irving, and rode through the scene of this terrible calamity. Although the houses had been rebuilt by the survivors of the families that possessed them, and the gardens and orchards looked fresh and beautiful, yet there were traces still to remind one of the awful might of the visitation.

The deeply reverent reflections of the aged custodian of the great resting-place of the departed I could not gainsay, and as he was silent for a while after his last remark I did not interrupt his medi-

tation, but quietly awaited his pleasure for further talk. At length, looking toward the entrance, he said cheerily :

“Here comes my little factotum, now—my Chinny. What have you there, boy?”

I was thus introduced to the old man’s four-pawed assistant, who had run in on three legs, holding in one paw a small basket which he dropped at the feet of the warden, who continued :

“Jubuti; and fine ones, too, you rogue. Well, Malcolm, let us have a little refreshment together. Good boy, Chinny.” He stroked the grinning little servant’s head affectionately. “An old chap, well along, and yet he can go up the tall palms and bring down the nuts as well as the youngest. These fellows, you know, do a good part of our fruit gathering—they like it. Look how the rascal picks out the best for you.”

The monkey had even done this, and I rewarded him with “A good boy, Chinny; you know where the good things are!” and patted him on the back. Finishing the delicious refreshment with a cup of tree milk that the guardian of the place brought from a stone pot set in a cool corner, I thanked him for his hospitality and rolled away in my nimble little wagon.

CHAPTER XVII.

AN UNLOOKED-FOR ADVENTURE.

Two months had passed, with enough of varied activity to enable me to become fairly accustomed to the life surrounding me. I was certainly acclimated and in excellent state physically. Restling insisted that there had been a marked improvement in my appearance. A clearer complexion and less angularity of feature were evident whenever I made my simple toilet, and if the Bruces, in their frank manner, referred to this improvement I hastened to answer that it was but a reflection of neighboring conditions, and that one could not live for weeks and months amid such influences and not grow better. I had become well known to a large section of the Oudemon people. My goalone had carried me on long excursions in various directions, and the universal kindness made me the guest of every house I might stop at. My name was frequently in the bulletins, and invitations to all sorts of "events" were constant. At the same time, there was a prevalent sentiment of *laissez-faire* that gave me a delightful sense of independence.

Alone or with company I explored this and that region and made notes of my findings for present

or future use. My adventurous vein found opportunity for ample play. There were large areas on the western border of the country quite covered with old forest and extensive bench or terrace formations rising toward the upper ridge offering rich returns to the mining prospector. An ordinary excursion into those quarters usually covered an entire day, as the distance from my "hotel" was at least fifty miles to points where it was necessary to leave my wagon and depend upon my legs for further transportation.

From one of these trips I had brought back specimens of iron, corundum and zinc that were pronounced by an engineer expert to be of an unusual character; the corundum especially was considered a very important find, the quality being of extraordinary fineness. If I would definitely locate the point where I had picked up the specimen, said Champlin, the engineer, he would be glad to investigate the matter, because a deposit of that grade of aluminum would be of high value in certain mechanical operations. A week or so later I left Bruces' quite early in the morning, my wagon supplied with hammer, chisel and pick, and a good box of lunch stuff, expecting to spend some hours on the ledges. Pursuing the same course that had been made on my last visit, a run of three hours brought me to the locality, and after thirty or forty minutes of inspection it was my good fortune to strike the place where I had found the corundum. Using my tools,

I turned out fragments of the oxide that seemed to be fully equal to the grade of the specimen taken home and submitted to the engineer. Marking the spot and noting down the relations of the place to certain trees and surface indications, I proceeded further up the ledge, examining the ground closely. Coming to a cliff-like projection, the approach to which was rather steep, my curiosity led me to attempt to scale it. With the pick I easily made footholds in the friable rock, and in twenty minutes had worked my way up the forty or fifty feet to the summit of the cliff. There I found a nearly level bench or platform extending about two hundred feet north and south, and sloping gradually toward the western crest. A giant cactus, the solitary inhabitant of the platform, invited me to rest in its irregular shade and to unsling the lunch box. The sun, high in mid-heaven, suggested noontime. I had become heated enough in my climb to accept the opportunity for at least a half hour's rest, and the refreshment provided by the excellent dietetic taste of mother Bruce.

A SUDDEN INTRODUCTION TO AN ANCIENT MINE.

While leisurely discussing the toothsome variety of fruit, biscuit and nut cream I studied the ground in the immediate neighborhood. Forty feet north from me a small part of the surface appeared to be depressed and saucer-shaped. Besides, the space,

instead of being composed of rock and crumble, like the remainder of the bench, was covered with a coarse vegetation of vine and mosses. This awakened my curiosity, and I determined to examine the peculiarity at close range. So, after dispatching my stock of provender, I got upon my feet, and, with pick in hand, walked to the vegetable circle. At a little distance from the margin several flowers of a brilliant purple caught my eyes. Their form was entirely new to my experience, and, thinking to secure a novelty for Ellice's herbarium, I strode upon the leafy bed. To my surprise the apparently firm surface yielded to my weight, and before there was time to make a step backward I found myself going downward with the mass of vine and moss. Had it not been for the tough fibrous strands which I instinctively clutched as I descended, my fall would have been disastrous, probably. As it was, I made a sheer drop of fully twenty feet ere the vines parted, and then landed upon a very narrow shelf, from which I rolled down a steep, funnel-like wall for a considerable distance, spasmodically digging the pick into the shaley rock, as I descended, to reduce the impetus, until brought to a halt at the bottom.

Although bruised and shaken, I was not seriously hurt, and got upon my legs as quickly as possible to ascertain the sort of "scrape" I had fallen into. The opening made in the roof as I burst through, with its almost noon tide light, clearly exposed the situation. I was in a funnel-like excavation which

at the bottom measured six paces, while at the top the diameter of the shaft, as I assumed it to be, was much greater—at least thirty feet. An opening which I assumed to be the entrance to a passage communicating with old mines of some kind, not more than four feet high, and so narrow that a man of my proportions would have to squeeze through it, led off toward the north, according to my pocket compass. It was utterly dark inside and discouraged attempt to enter.

The walls of the hole that held me prisoner exhibited evidences of tool work; they were rough, but here and there were crystals and stones of varied color glistening in their crusty bed. Disengaging a dark wine-hued specimen from the schistose, I obtained what I believed to be a ruby of unusual size. Verily, if the other brilliant objects around me were what their color suggested—amethysts, hyacinths, lazuli, garnets, topazes, sapphires—I was a later Monte Cristo, in a mountain trap, with riches in sight that would have made Dumas' hero envious. It seemed to me that a pocketful of these stones gleaming down from their ancient matrix would be enough in my home city to enable me to take front rank with the plutocrats of stocks and bonds. But what, after all, was this lavish display of wealth unestimated to a man alone in a deep hole many miles away from friends and with extremely limited means of self-rescue?

Recovering at length from the surprise of this

sudden fall into the bowels of the earth and its dream of riches and splendor, I now began to cast about for some way of escape, if that were possible. No, the sides of the excavation, though sloping, appeared everywhere quite too smooth for ascent; no projections had been left by the ancient miners large enough for safe foothold. Besides, little hope was offered of my being able with so slender a tool to cut footholds, and so mount upward, a slow and wearisome task at the best. Even if able to do this, supposing my pick would stand the wear, fully sixty feet lay between me and the upper atmosphere. That meant hours of perilous labor and strain.

Then the opening in the wall—perhaps it would afford an outlet and escape from my trouble; I decided to look into that a little. In a side pocket I carried a small lamp, containing a supply of condensed gas sufficient for the ordinary contingencies of an excursion. I had only to touch a little slide covering a minute opening, when the gas, flowing out and coming into contact with the air, burst into flame of a penetrating character. With lamp alight, I squeezed into the passage and soon found myself able to stand erect with ample space on each side. Twenty steps within two small scintillating spots, forward, about an inch apart, caught my gaze; they disappeared, and a slight rustling indicated the withdrawal of some animal, probably a serpent or lizard, into the deeper recesses of the passage. However, trusting to the security given by the lamp, I

walked slowly on, and soon entered a small chamber or the beginning of a much broader passage, the floor of which perceptibly inclined downward. I noted then that the small, tapering flame that guided my steps was drawn slightly inward, as if affected by a current of air. The walls of the tunnel here were quite smooth and sparkled with many-colored reflections of the light, suggesting more of the valuable mineral deposits that lined the shaft. Estimating that my supply of gas would last nearly two hours, I determined to explore this channel as far as my light would permit.

Making my way more rapidly now, but with eyes and ears alert, I soon became aware of the fact that the chief or sole inhabitants of this subterranean relic of an ancient industry were snakes. They seemed to become more evident as I proceeded, one glaring at me from a point on the wall, another from a niche or corner on the floor, and all hastening with low hisses to escape from the sudden light. To be sure, the situation was not cheerful, yet, with the lamp in one hand and the pick in the other, I felt safe, for the reptiles fled rapidly as I advanced, scarcely affording an opportunity to obtain an idea of their size or character.

Perhaps I had advanced 250 feet, when the passage suddenly divided into two branches, like the upper arms of the letter V. To guard against error I detached a large crystal from its bed in the wall near by and placed it on the floor of the main pas-

sage at a distance of six feet from the forking, and then proceeded to inspect the right branch, which was a trifle narrower than the main channel, but in other respects of the same character. Seventy paces or so in this brought me to another division into passages quite narrow, and lower in the roof, and here, as soon as the gleam of my lamp shone upon the gray walls, the rustling and hisses were so marked that I concluded I must have trespassed on the sanctuary of the reptile tribe, and it might be foolhardy to venture further that way. So I returned and entered the left passage. Fifty feet within this I found the walls retreating from each other and the roof rising, until I came to stand in a sort of vaulted chamber ten paces in diameter, with three openings into passages that were smaller than any of the others. Here I carefully examined all parts, but no signs of communication with the outer world could be discovered, although the air seemed to have a peculiar freshness that could be ascribed only to a source of ventilation not very distant.

I was debating with myself on the expediency of continuing the quest, when suddenly my light flared out, leaving me in darkness; no, not darkness quite, although that was the first effect of the lamp's exhaustion, for, strangely enough, there came into evidence an iridescent mist that changed what would have been a pitchy blackness otherwise to a gray, and through this gray a crystal of special brilliancy

here and there gleamed coldly. Like a man in a dense fog I stumbled along, grazing the wall with my pick to note the course and avoid collisions with the rock in its windings. At length a pale bluish gleam shone near my feet; stooping down, I found the stone that I had placed near the fork of the first passage, and at the same time a cold, slimy touch on the side of my hand warned me of the proximity of a snake. They were evidently coming out again from their retreats. With some haste and the instinct of direction, I now made my way along, and soon a broad spot of yellowish light ahead assured me that the more comfortable scene of my fall was near at hand.

A STRUGGLE FOR LIBERTY.

More than an hour had been spent in the underground ways, as the sun had passed so much toward the west as to make a marked difference in the illumination of the shaft, as afforded by the opening I had torn in the cap of vegetation. Studying that, I saw how the vines and mosses had their roots in soil formed by the crumbling rock and drift on the margin, and that in my fall several long ropes of vine had been brought down, their loose extremities hanging within reach if I could only surmount the sharp incline between the shelf and the bottom. Two or three hours more and the light would fade where I stood. Picking at several points in the wall, I

found on one side a layer of comparatively soft rock extending well above my head. So I began the toilsome effort of making niches in the stone, for the attempt to climb the forty feet or so of wall between the bottom and the dependent ropes of vine. My little tool proved more effective than was expected. In about twenty minutes by guess I had made four pairs of holes large enough to hold, which gave me a rise of eight feet, but I found that the brittle mineral had a disagreeable tendency to crumble under my weight enough to suggest the much more disagreeable possibility of a sudden fall at almost any stage of my slow progress upward.

It may be assumed easily by the reader that while thus occupied as to my hands and feet my mind was anxiously and intensely absorbed in thoughts regarding things of much personal concern. What would failure to escape from this unlucky hole mean to my mother, sisters, to Olive and other friends? Was not this coming to Oudemont a foolhardy, absurd thing, after all? Had I not involved myself here in relations trying to my conscience? Was I not a fool, anyhow, to be going here and there? What real benefit would result to me or others with all this affectation of experience in a country shut away from the world supposing that I escaped with a whole skin from my uncheerful predicament? Could I survive a night in this well-like excavation? Might I not be the prey of poisonous and voracious serpents and other savage beasts that not unlikely

had their dens in the bowels of the mountain and at night sallied into this pit for what they might find?

Four more pairs of holes carried me up eight feet more, yet the vines seemed scarcely nearer, and the stone appeared to be harder to work, and there was a marked increase of shadow in my surroundings. Once, too, my left hand almost lost its clutch, and that meant nearly a tumble from the perch I had made. The perseverance of King Alfred and of Timour were rivaled by my efforts to triumph over the mischance that had befallen me, as up and down that rough steep I climbed at intervals to rest, as hands, feet and head became fatigued with their unwonted exertion. Of course I reflected earnestly on what my new friends might do in default of my return, and was inclined to feel censorious because none had given an intimation regarding this mountainside trap. Since I had become possessor of the autolat, on returning from a ramble one or more of these friends usually met me on the way. Willis or Stella or Ellice had run out and accompanied me back. Father Bruce seemed to enjoy the talks we briskly kept up while riding in our self-propelled carriages, side by side, homeward; and Restling had found time to wheel my way more than once when he knew the place and time of my operations for a certain day.

Getting down from the hacking of the twenty-third hole, my right hand felt numb from the shock

of striking the stone. My good little pick, too, showed the effects of its extraordinary use. Then the impracticability of further work of the kind forced itself upon my reluctant conviction. Not more than half of the way up to the shelf! Oh, for the aerial dress! If I had only that! But not having it, the prospect of passing the night in the pit sent a chill through my spinal column.

That morning I had left the Bruces' with but a slight intimation of my purpose beyond that of prospecting a while along the mountain slope and then going over to the iron mills. No questions were asked, and if they had been I should not have given a clearer notion of my excursion. Over in district twenty-two, twenty-five miles from the mills, the young folks were to have a musical evening, and I had partly promised, *i.e.*, if not otherwise occupied, to join them for supper at eighteen hours, and aid the amateur performance with my horn, which I had brought in my goalone. My non-appearance at this event might cause inquiry? There was a chance for help there. But how would they find me?—how reach this den of unspeakable probabilities?

THE HAPPY ESCAPE.

The shadows were deepening—the sun must be on the western ridge now, or very near it. Oh, for that horn. I could make some noise with it, and

possibly a traveler or miner passing not far away would catch the sound and turn in search of its producer. But I could make some noise anyway, which were better than crouching inert there in the gloaming dullness. I whistled through my fingers, hallooed at the top of my voice. At the depth of the shaft all sounds appeared to be half stifled by the harsh and hollow echoes. Once a dull roar and light jar followed a heroic attempt at shouting. It was probably a blast in a mine not far to the south-east, the closing act of the workmen for that day. I whistled and shouted at intervals, trying my voice in different pitches and naming one after another friends living in the nearer sections.

Meanwhile time wore on; the sunlight had gone, and I looked from my gloomy den up through the break in the leafy roof, watching the hues of orange, green and blue as they faded in the deepening twilight. The sky space in view was limited, indeed, yet it had a great fascination, and never before had I seen so much of beauty in the penciling of the sunset upon that canvas of ether. Finally a peculiar yellow haze settled down, penetrating even into my prison and lighting up faintly the gray walls. But soon it was gone, and the stars leaped into being with a sudden intensity that was striking. It was now night indeed. Still I kept up my periodic call, listening meanwhile with senses astrain for some response, hoping almost against hope.

The nearest family dwelling, so far as I knew,

was more than twelve miles away, and the few miners or shopmen who might be returning to their homes or out on the road at this hour were not likely to pass within eight or ten miles of my misadventure. How late it had become I could not tell, for I had not carried my watch (a good American) while in Oudemon, because it was unnecessary. At numerous points there were clocks, run by a gravity method, and very accurate, striking the half and quarter-hours. Of course, in my pit their pleasant chimes could not be heard. There was one, I remembered, near the spot where I had found the corundum; quite out of the way, seemingly, yet the skilled artisan who constructed it had a benevolent purpose in view, to admonish the venturous spirit, who, like myself, might be wandering in a region infrequently visited of the lapse of time. A guess put it not far from eight o'clock, or twenty hours.

My throat had become dry with its vocal efforts, and my nervous system was weary enough to sink into sleep. Looking toward the side of the pit where the entrance to the passage was, I saw with a start, yet without surprise, what seemed at first gleaming points moving up and down and sidewise in graceful rhythm. The serpents were there—coming in! Perhaps charmed by my voice. They were quiet anyway. Again and again my call arose, and a long, shrill whistle—the easier effort—which appeared to have a marked effect upon the reptiles, their eyes, or rather heads, bobbing up and down

rapidly while it lasted, and then coming to a brief pause.

The gleaming eyes were increasing, too.

* * * * *

Suddenly there came to my eager ears a sound—distant, low. It was repeated—twice, three times—and then I imagined a vague reflection of my name glanced down the wall. With all my force I answered. At intervals of a few seconds the sounds came again, higher and clearer. Surely now my name and a searching party. A little later, more calls—among them a rich, clarion-like voice rang out its contralto. I knew it most joyfully. It was Ellice. Shouting in response, I cried: “Beware of the pit!” “Look out for the vines! I have fallen through!” Now the voice came nearer, and I repeated my warning.

“He is here!” It was Restling who spoke, and close to the excavation.

“Yes, Archbold!” I cried. “I am down in this wretched hole, and awfully glad you have found me!”

“Thank God, we are in time!” It was father Bruce who now spoke.

“Oh, I am so glad, dear Malcolm! Are you well?”

“Yes, good Ellice; only a little tired and perhaps impatient.”

“Look out for this, boy!”

Down came a lamp box, tied to a rope, which fell

near enough to be quickly found in the darkness. Opening the slide, a bright ray filled the pit, and my happy eyes beheld with fresh astonishment a squirming maze—hundreds of snakes, large and small, apparently as surprised as myself, hissing and hustling for their dark lair—the passage.

“Malcolm, what have you there, making that hideous noise?” asked Ellice in a tone of anxiety.

“Only my companions of the night, dear girl. They are going home now, since better company has come,” I replied with voice a-tremble with nervous reaction. I had been *surrounded* by those squirming creatures, and did not know it.

“Are you strong enough to hold the rope while we draw you up?”

“I will try, dear fellows,” was my answer. Tying the rope around my waist, I coiled it on my right arm and then signaled “Ready!” In a few moments they had drawn me to the surface, and there half a dozen strong hands caught me and made sure of my deliverance from that uncanny prison. Looking around the little group there in the misty light of a waning moon just above the horizon, I saw tears on the cheeks of those trusty friends. Archbold and Ellice held my hands until assured that I had sustained little physical injury. Indeed, the joy of rescue made me almost forget the weariness of those hours of hard work and desperate watching. Bruce handed me a flask containing orange juice of mother Milline’s own expression,

and also a box of sandwiches spread thickly with choice butterfly honey. Joy ministers to appetite. I was hungry, and the delicious refreshment met the need of my body admirably. Thanking Bruce for his thoughtfulness, he rejoined, smilingly: "We knew very well, Malcolm, that you must need food, for you did not take much of a ration for your nooning."

Now we addressed ourselves to the task of descending from the shelf-like level. Bross Champlin, chemist and mining engineer, one of the party, had brought a heavy pick. He had detected the footholds I made in the cliff side, and quickly enlarged them so that both ascent and descent were much facilitated. Near the foot of the cliff stood the wagons of my rescuers, the Morgan flier among them.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOW I WAS RESCUED.

“Who will be my conductor, dear people?” I asked. “The country hereabouts at night looks a little strange, and my goalone might run away with me, and both tumble into another hole.”

Restling stepped forward laughing. “Allow me to drive for you, Malcolm. Champlin will take the lead. Our four wagons were soon speeding toward the southeast. We had not gone more than a mile or two when I heard the distant peal of bells one after another, six of different tone.

“Those are tower bells, Archbold. What are they ringing for at this hour of the night?”

“Oh, I doubt not that some of our people have heard that the lost is found.” There must have been that roguish twinkle in his eyes I knew so well, if there were any significance in the tone of his voice. So my misadventure had become widely known in the country, and it could not have been through any means other than the brain or mind telegraphy in practice here. I wished to know more of it, and here was an opportunity.

“Archbold, I have become so used to your ways

that nothing astonishes me; but I am very curious to know how you came so quickly to my rescue. Now that I review the circumstances it seems strange enough even if some one in passing near the cliff heard my repeated calls."

"Your calls were heard, my boy, but by no one who chanced to be anywhere in that neighborhood."

"Can it be that my voice carried so far?"

"Yes, in a certain way."

"Oh, you had an impression. Do you mean that some idea of my predicament came to you in that way?"

"Yes, Malcolm. I had been down in district twenty, was detained, and on my way homeward I distinctly heard a repetition of my name, and in your manner but with an unusual emphasis——"

"What! district twenty must be forty miles from the ridge at that point."

"Yes, forty-three."

"My dear friend, do you mean to say that you gathered a notion of my plight and the locality then?"

"Yes, my young inquisitor."

"But how did the others know about it? I confess, despite what I have heard while here, I have been incredulous regarding the matter of mental telepathy, because our men of science have said so much to discount it—at least as a procedure having any positive and definite feature available for practical uses. Your people when they speak of com-

municating with each other do so in a very quiet fashion and for that reason I have not been led to give the subject the attention I originally intended."

"Set it down to account of our gentle weaknesses, Malcolm."

"No, certainly, my dear friend, trust me. But now I am a debtor to you very seriously, and you will have an earnest, believing listener to whatever you may tell me. Excuse my insistence."

"There is no secret about it, my dear boy, only the operation of psychic principles that are as old as the universe. Your people in the North have sent messages by electric or etheric currents without the agency of wire connection between transmitter and receiver. Even lately an American by the name of Loomis has demonstrated this fact by experiments in one of the Southern States. We only go a step or so farther, using our brain or mind to originate and propagate the message, and also to receive and interpret it. It is mental or nerve force operating in conjunction with etheric waves instead of electrical energy.

"While you were in that unpleasant, trap-like hole, the situation of which was not generally known—if known at all among our people, I suppose—though in a survey made forty years ago I would find some account of it as an archaeological feature, but owing to its comparative isolation little further regard has been given to it, and probably no one has attempted an investigation of its recesses,

leaving that to the northern Hotspurs whose ardent spirits prompt to deeds of audacious——”

“Spare me, Archbold, and I will own to all the temerity of a California mining prospector in the early fifties,” I cried, squeezing his arms. “But tell me how you received the impression of my unlucky plight.”

“While you were in those depths and the hours passed slowly, doubtless your mind became more and more absorbed in the problem of how to get out, and especially after those repeated trials to climb the wall your feelings became rather intense.”

“You may believe it, after I saw the blinking eyes of the snakes peering at me in the gloom.”

“There were many of them?”

“Hundreds, it seemed to my distraught fancy!”

“That must be looked into—and there may be other animals of an objectionable character pent in the old workings. Albeit, then, your thought of escape must have been absorbing, and its evident uncertainty forced into conscious recognition a hundred things of much concern to heart and soul.”

“Yes, Archbold, you may be sure of that—thoughts of home, friends, my life past and present, of those here I so much value—of you, and the Bruces and Dentons in particular, and I will admit that the idea of being able possibly to make an impression entered my mind, and was dwelt upon while I continued my calls and whistling.”

“So, you sent out a current of nerve energy that

must have been much stronger than the ordinary—carrying the appeal for help. I was in the area through which this current radiated and my mind, like a telegraphic receiver, was affected, and giving my whole attention for the time to the matter interpreted clearly enough for action the message you were trying to communicate. There were others probably who were affected also, but the line of clear connection depends upon the psychic relationship of parties. You and I know each other well."

"From the first, Archbold, I was drawn strangely toward you."

"Yes, my boy. Now these mental currents are selective, besides being given direction by the will of the sender, and the degree of vibratory response depends upon the harmony or attunement of the parties. Then, too, as you may know, sensitiveness or capacity for mental transference is not universal, but a matter of endowment, temperament, so to speak, and for practical use requires the development of culture. While our people are as well adapted for the exercise of this property as any living, but few comparatively have cultivated it. In fine, it has become a sort of vocation on the part of some in each district to whom others go in case they wish to communicate directly with acquaintances at a distance, just as your people go to a telegraph station and employ the operator there to dispatch a message. Stella Bruce has shown a special readiness in impression, and made not a little prog-

ress for a young girl in interpreting and transmitting. So when I heard from you I spoke to her, inquiring if you were home. It was several minutes before I received an answer. She was doubtless asleep. Meanwhile further impressions came from you, and I had about decided their course. It was then past twenty hours.

“When I heard from Stella, she replied no, but that you had gone that morning on a collecting expedition to the west ridge, and it was supposed that you might have stopped for the night with a miner or some one in the neighborhood. Then I was quite sure that you had met with an accident, and needed help. I requested her to ask father Bruce to join me as soon as possible at the great maguey west of district twenty-two.”

“How accurate you were, Archbold! on my direct course as I ran to the terrace.”

“Then I sought Champlin; found him, and at twenty-two hours and the half we were at the maguey. After waiting but fifteen minutes, Jasper, Willis and the girl Ellice—she must be much interested in you, Malcolm”—this uttered in a tone of grave inquiry, with a vein of admonition in it—“arrived.”

“How they must have driven. But Willis has a speedy goalone. And Ellice, dear girl, that she should come all the way.”

“She insisted on coming. Stella ran over and told her.”

“I am unworthy of such kind friends.”

Without comment on this remark the worthy councillor went on:

“We found your wagon, and then your calls guided us straight enough, until we stood on that sheet of rock with its ancient opening to cuttings of which you know more than any of us. It was Ellice’s quick ear that caught the sound of your whistle first, even before we found the goalone, and of course confirmed my chosen direction. We answered frequently, but being down so low in the rocky layers it was difficult for our shouts to reach you, and we must have been well up the cliff before you heard us distinctly.”

“I believe that I heard your calls, Archbold, fully fifteen minutes before you were at the shaft. I was very apprehensive that one of you might fall into the hole as I had—and so repeated my warnings.”

“That was well, Malcolm. We had given the lead to Champlin, who had his lamp, and the moon was coming up, so that we could examine the ground conveniently. As soon as he saw the vines he recognized your mishap. There is another excavation of a like nature known to the miners in the northern benches, he says, and overgrown also.”

“To me the one just left has certain wonderful characteristics, of which I shall wish to speak later. Indeed, Archbold, although I am inexpressibly glad to have gotten out of the scrape so soon, with help brought so providentially—it seems a providence, dear friend, to me that you were gifted to sense my

imminent peril—yet I should like to inspect those crypts and passages that I discovered. If my lamp had not failed——”

“I don’t know, young sir, whether we can permit you to attempt more of such venturesome investigations.” He said this with a light laugh.

A PHILOSOPHICAL EXPOSITION.

“Be sure, kind councillor, I shall go better prepared than on this occasion. Let us talk a bit more of this system of mental telegraphy, if you don’t object. Some of our philosophers, as I have read, compare the brain with a storage battery, only with the addition of the life principle, and the forces of mind faculty. Can it be that this living battery generates a peculiar electricity all-penetrative and capable under subtile management of transmitting the behests of our will? Is it because we do not understand the matter that so little attention is given to these latent forces of nature by our educated people?”

“That is to a large extent the reason, Malcolm, and there are other subjects of as high importance to the world that your savants regard askance because the psychic powers of our organization have most to do with their expression and results. Few indeed of any people realize the extent of the operation of soul on matter and form, and the possibilities of accomplishment through psychic agencies in-

telligently employed in our affairs. The brain may be considered a living machine, battery, dynamo, of great power, with the property of growing into conditions of wider capability. As to the etheric transference of thought—let me cite a common illustration. You know how two musical instruments tuned in harmony will respond to each other? You strike one, the other sounds in the same key and its octaves. So, my boy, musical instruments react upon each other—simple mechanism; and brain will act upon brain, but the latter are living instruments infinitely superior, more delicate in susceptibility, more powerful in energy. Two mirrors placed at a considerable distance from each other will reflect flashes of light as transmitted from one or the other through vibratory currents existing in the atmosphere. So light comes to our seeing organs from immeasurable distances carried by etheric currents that must pervade the vast spaces of the universe. The eye sense but differs from the ear sense or the touch sense in kind; all are matters of impression; all furnished with sensitive diaphragms, as it were, for the reception and transmission of impulses whether of a mental or physical origin. Thus with our knowledge of the subtle forces abounding in earth and sky, it is required only to adjust two brains and minds to each other in a harmonious connection or *rapport*, in order to obtain complete results in the exchange of thought. Your own psychological literature is more exten-

sive than you think, and if you will take time for research in it you will find the records of many successful instances of mind communication at great distances, experimentally made or for a set purpose. Our science years ago solved the seeming mystery of mind transference, and formulated the principles and prepared the method governing its practice. There is nothing supernatural in it, but merely an extension of our ordinary sense faculties and nerve force in a comparatively new field as the world goes.”

“I should be inclined to think, Archbold, that this practice requires an extraordinary sensitiveness and elasticity of faculty—even an additional or new sense.”

“No, Malcolm, it seems clear enough to me that we have a sufficient number of senses and faculties by original endowment, and that our advance in any psychologic respect requires only a better use, a higher extension of these old mind powers ‘in their relation to the cosmic forces.’ ”

When we rolled into the back court of the Bruce home it was past two o’clock, a most unusual hour for Oudemonites to be stirring. Mother Bruce and Stella were at the door.

“A happy meeting,” both greeted me warmly. I took their offered hands, and pressed them without answer.

“That was a horrible, horrible place, cousin,” said the girl. “I really saw you standing there gazing

upward in hope almost forlorn, yet you saw the stars, and were courageous."

"My sweet little seeress, don't say anything more; you must know all. Many things I thought of, that I should not care to tell my best friends, even were they so far away that they could not get at me."

"Now, my dears, let the boy go straight to bed. See how haggard he looks! To-morrow he will tell us all about this strange adventure."

We obeyed Milline's admonition.

CHAPTER XIX.

A LAW UNTO THEMSELVES.

RESTLING's intimations as given me in those few interviews that were had in my native city were more than realized as concerns the social atmosphere of Oudemon. What I was inclined at the time to consider little more than playful sallies reflecting on our manners and customs I found to be but true references to practices common enough in the life of his people. Accustomed to meet the belted policeman wherever I had traveled hitherto I could scarcely persuade myself that he did not exist also here. It seemed to me for a long time that some such guardian of public order must be lurking near, like a Pinkerton detective at a summer resort of the better class at home, and on occasion would thrust his officious presence upon my notice and display his badge of authority. But no occasion introduced him; the streets, groves and gardens, the assemblies and entertainments were free of him. The children sang and frolicked, ran over the grassy meadows and lawns, plucked flowers and fruits, played games of ball and tag with no fear of a gruff voice bidding them, "Stop that, now!" or "Clear out!"

A social concourse drew me into a central district where I met three councillors and several of the older men. In the exchange of remarks a discussion arose on the subject of government. Daniel Norris, a veteran of notable sagacity, in the esteem of all, asked me several questions regarding methods of administering the laws up North, and I answered him as well as my memory would serve. Finally I said: "Friend Daniel, I have been studying your ways somewhat while down here, and have attempted to form a conclusion as to the fundamental basis of your success. Of course I recognize the high level of moral character among you, and know that it has a great deal to do with the peace and order of your community. But what are the main elements of your civil state? What policy, indeed, has helped most toward this high line of universal practice?"

The venerable man replied: "In a word, Malcolm, it is the operation of the Royal Law that is mainly the reason for our happy solution of some of the most difficult problems affecting the relations of life. You look as if I spoke in riddles. A reference to the Royal Law is not new to you, certainly."

"No, Daniel; yet I cannot conceive that your Royal Law as a working formulary may be any better than the cardinal principles upon which our moral standards are founded."

"We cannot claim more, young brother; or to have anything wiser than you have in this respect;

for all that we know concerning life in its higher and spiritual phases is but the teaching of men who stand as much in the relation of apostles and sages to you as they do to us."

"Now that is quite likely, venerable sir," was my sanguine rejoinder, "yet does not satisfy me, when I find so different a state of things ethical and civil here; that you have, indeed, in the course of a hundred or so years reached a point that has been the dream of philosophers and idealists for ages?"

"Your philosophers and idealists, your Platos and Solons, your Johnsons and Rousseaus, your Franklins, Fourriers, and Georges have overshot the mark," the sage insisted; "in the earnestness of their endeavors to take in all the issues of public and private life they have presented views too complex for the masses. Instead of solving the problem they have added to its intricacy. In the start our fathers, as simple men looking toward a common object, sought to be simple in their ideas and methods, to propound rules, or rather ways of conduct, that all could understand without appealing to a master of logic and synthesis for explanation. Take people as they average up there in your country, there will not be found much difference as to the proper course of action in respect to a given question. You can trust their conscience—or moral instinct—to give the right answer, if they will be sincere in voicing its prompting. But you have

so many prejudicial and disturbing suggestions floating in the air that the sincerity and frankness of their nature appear to suffer a kind of suppression or subversion and do not exert their normal sway in general conduct.

“Our fathers and mothers strove to make us single in action and true to ourselves in this matter of sincerity. They believed in interchange and co-operation, in the necessity of a mutual equality and interdependence, if harmony were to be promoted and fraternity of spirit established. Those founders of our nation—if I may so name it—were democratic, as you might say; they did not believe in classes, and so introduced no system or custom in our social or economic relations that might tend to the production of individual or class distinctions.”

“One great agency in this respect, as we believe, is money—the so-called ‘circulating medium’ of your people. Probably when first introduced ages ago money was regarded as a mere convenience in trade; but it was not long before it became a symbol of wealth, fortune and power, and thus a special object of acquisition for itself. To accumulate a large amount of money is the chief purpose, apparently, of your civilization to-day. The wealth of individuals in your community is a criterion of superiority. Look at its distribution, however! How few among you are rich or well-to-do; how many are poor and dependent! If we are to be-

lieve what many of your writers say, your communities live in a state of dangerous agitation on that account. Besides there are questions of socialism, questions of labor, questions of political and civil right and privilege, questions of education, questions of religion and so on which are topics of vehement and even violent disputation. The rich are haughty and severe toward the masses; the masses jealous and vindictive toward the rich, with even a section of the so-called working class by no means small awaiting opportunity to hurl them from their places of self-assumed privilege and power."

"I must admit, Daniel, true son of the historic Seth, that you are right to a greater extent than is complimentary, in this statement. We have been threatened at home with serious disturbances of civil order and even social revolutions, so strong is the feeling of discontent among our working classes. But do you deny that he who is industrious and energetic should reap the benefit of his labor and thrift in fortune and reputation? Because of the almost inevitable results of his energy, skill and tact such a man becomes an object of envy and malice to people who are for the most part negligent and improvident in their habits and practices."

"I should be far from denying the rewards of merit to any, my young master of logic," returned the sage, kindly, "but if I understand the nature of your trading and industrial life, as I have read and heard about it, there is in the spirit of the success-

ful, in their attitude toward the unsuccessful workers, that which is largely responsible for the bitterness of the laboring majority toward the rich few. This sentiment, to be sure, is an inheritance of the ages, no mere sprout of recent growth as you know. In the old time there was a similar state of unhappy contrasts—the lordly pretension and domination of the nobility, and the servile humility of the peasantry. The rich and the poor in your civilization but perpetuate the difference of past generations.

“Starting with no privileged class, none pretending to be better than others, and none who made it their object to subject or control their fellows for the purpose of self-aggrandizement, it was found practicable to get along by a plan of exchanges that required no symbol of value. Every family took for use as much land as seemed necessary for maintenance. There was no ownership recognized but that of occupation and use, and in time we learned the acreage suitable to the average family and have apportioned our districts accordingly.”

INDIVIDUALITY IN SOCIALISM.

“All this sounds well, Daniel, but I am a little puzzled about this matter of individual ownership of houses, etc., among you, and how you have managed to bring about the separateness of family interests and yet practice a substantially successful communism in your general relations. Our social-

ists at home appear to be aiming at a result that would merge the individual into the community, and deprive him for the most part of his several personality. The one is to be sacrificed for the many according to their policy—a proposition that seems to me adverse to the law of human right."

Smilingly the veteran took up the thread, continuing: "I am quite in accord with you, young philosopher. To deprive a human being of his separate personality, his right to think and act for himself, is to ignore a most important principle in the constitution of human nature, which lies at the basis of a man's activity, affects intimately moral integrity and its co-factor, the sentiment of responsibility. His selfness is lost; he is converted into an automaton for the most part. We recognize the right of men and women to be married and to organize their own homes. If any care to associate together in a sort of community or home-club there is no objection; but we are generally agreed as concerns marriage itself in preserving the monogamic relation. The family status is preferred by our women, and they as you may know largely control in our domestic arrangements."

"I have no objection to make regarding the domestic conditions, for your home settlements are delightful. But, dear Daniel, I don't get the thing quite into my head yet—this property clause of the contract."

The old man shook his head at the word contract,

and the two or three other men who had been standing near listening quietly while the colloquy was in progress looked at me as if wondering at my persistence.

“Indulge me for a little further.”

“Certainly, Malcolm, we should like to clear up all your doubt,” was the genial answer.

PROGRESS ON SPIRITUAL MOTIVES.

“Then, most kind mentor, you know that the faculty of acquisitiveness or the desire to possess, is an instinct recognized by the metaphysicians, and its exercise as demonstrated by the experience of the world is fundamental to human progress. In fact there is no incentive more powerful to human action. How in your economy have you succeeded in overcoming its material influence upon the conduct of your people?”

“It seems to me, Malcolm,” the sage returned, “that when our founders decided to dispense with money or anything representing unitary value merely, they eliminated the chief object of acquisition in the old order, and thus by one direct measure the force of the instinct in one phase of its expression that had become habitually excessive was overcome. You may urge, however, that the faculty or property still remained in the organism of mind, and would have its effect on motive and purpose. Yes, but in time with the greatly changed

conditions of life here the objective aims of the faculty became much altered. A psychical character was imparted to it; a moral tone took the place of the old materialistic expression, and we grew to desire the possession of things more spiritual and sentimental. We wanted more information regarding the country in which we lived, and so began to study its topography, climate and products, and sought to discover the best methods of converting field, forest and hill to use. Man's first and last and happiest occupation, it seems to me, and most of us believe it, is to till the ground and subdue it. Further our selfhood came into more prominent observation; its instincts craved a better recognition, and we desired to be in possession of the secrets of our own mental and physical constitution; to know ourselves as to the sources of character and being; and with such advancement as was made in this line we were prompted to discover and invent methods by which we could adapt ourselves better to the conditions of our environment. Then, with our new learning of these things, we became more zealous to learn how to live with each other, and to make our relations physical and social conducive to mutual improvement and happiness."

The old man's face glowed with enthusiasm, his voice took on a stronger tone. Ah, the topic was one to call out his earnestness, and give expression to his best convictions. I stood close to him; perhaps my face reflected his own feeling, for he gazed

at me with the tenderness of a loving father—and smilingly went on:

“In proportion as we learned, my dear son, of the constitution of our body we became more competent to manage its functions to our benefit, and to make the conditions of health a matter of systematic control. One by one things that were dangerous in any way were destroyed or expelled from near contact, and our dwelling place assumed a totally different appearance from its old, primitive state. Far from being now all that we would have it, you can perhaps judge of what has been done from your knowledge of the country beyond the ridges.”

“A most remarkable difference, I will confess.”

“Yes, my son, and yet the Bolivian and Chilian countries are better than was the most of our territory when we came first to live here, aside from its resources of water. We have found abundant work to our hand, and nature has responded in loving promptness to our united and cheerful efforts to clear the wilderness and make it a fit abode for those who would try to live up toward the level of the thought that inspired the first settlers.

“Bear with an old man’s garrulity, young scion of the bustling North——”

“Oh, my dear prophet of the higher wisdom, I am far from tiring as I listen to you,” was my exclamation, and I took and pressed the seamed but yet unwasted hand. Continuing, I said:

“Yours appears to be a peculiar socialism wherein

the welfare of the individual is a natural incident of the system. Then, too, I do not find any evidence of a force or power that impels or restricts a man's action with respect to the objective point of social or several benefit; yet you must be subject to an undercurrent, so to speak, of sentiment aside from the monitions of habit practice or good conduct motive. Our people have good intentions and high motives, but are not saved from wholesale practices of a very harmful nature. Take for instance the habit of alcoholism or drunkenness so prevalent among us—even in our best circles. Something deeper and stronger than good intentions and high motives merely is required to overcome a chronic passion, and your people certainly must have it, for the bad demon in human nature seems to have been exorcised or driven out of your psychic combination."

"It may be as you seem disposed to argue, my young brother," rejoined Norris; "perhaps, though, that Frenchman named Laccassagne fitly strikes the point when he remarks, 'the social environment is the cultivation medium of criminality,' with a further inference that 'every society has the criminals that it deserves.' So your people at home must rather lightly entertain their good intentions and high motives more as a sentimental idealism than as a deep, earnest, determined purpose. If the 'bad demon,' which I interpret as the impulse of undisciplined propensity and passion—have been 'ex-

orcised' in us to a degree, it is because of the habits and practices that have grown chronic with us for the exercise of the faculties and powers at once natural and becoming to human beings. We believe that the instinctive yearnings of our organization should be met, but in a way that promotes well being."

"What, my worthy mentor, are these instinctive yearnings in your category of indulgence?" I here demanded, thinking to elicit some eccentricity of psychological view.

The sage gazed at me fixedly for a moment and then replied in terms that surprised me:

"Certainly, my young inquisitor, you must know that man is endowed with certain essential aims and yearnings, among the most insistent of which are the want of the Infinite, which embraces his spiritual and religious life; the want of food, which means the supplies required for the nurture and growth of the body; and the want of sex, which means the relationships of home and society, and the perpetuation of his kind. An appreciative understanding of these basic wants, and reasonable activity for their acquirement, means happiness and a realization of the purpose of life; while a course that is subservient to the impulses of caprice and passion means failure to realize a satisfaction of soul or body."

"Surely in this category you have comprehended the chief needs of our nature," I exclaimed, "and I can fairly see how a well ordered course of living

may realize a satisfying degree of each; but the mutual, unselfish, fraternal coöperation of the men and women of a society is indispensable to reach the high object."

"Yes, brother Malcolm, to avoid the effects of selfishness it is necessary to exclude those things in current life that inspire a selfish activity of the lower feelings. The motive of your laws and government springs mostly from the purpose to repress or punish the consequences of selfishness; and yet the attainments that your people appear to regard as best exemplifying your civilization are only products of a grand selfishness, that is masked under certain more acceptable names. Were your civilization a real progress in what ennobles and purifies the human, you would require fewer laws and fewer judges and juries to take account of their violation."

"Ah, me, I fear that many generations will have passed and several revolutions, social and political, ere my people shall be able to show the character that indicates an organic homogeneity and harmony anywhere approaching the moral order prevailing here. You people are law-abiding without laws to observe. Each man, and woman, among you seems to think and act from an instinctive sense of the fitness of things, with a spontaneity of regard for fairness and kindness that really places common statute law bearing on conduct and prescribing what is proper or improper quite at fault."

My companions all smiled at this, as if my meaning were parabolic.

“Certainly, dear Malcolm, your view of us is kind enough; yet we know and realize that there remains much room for improvement, and I feel, as many others do also, that it is best to keep ever in view the possibilities of a better condition. But,” added this remarkable prophet of the higher wisdom, “I shall not ask you, son, to give much more of your attention, for I have been, I fear, a little selfish in talking so much on what is a favorite theme, you know, dear friends.”

“No, no, brother Daniel, you cannot be selfish; we are always glad to hear you.”

“Well, well, brothers, a few more words only. I would say, Malcolm, that the possessions we value most are the respect and affection of the people with whom we live, and although as individuals there is a natural difference between one and another in capacity for the appreciation of the spiritual as well as for understanding natural and physical things, yet sympathy and kindness and affection are the ruling features of our every-day life. But, Malcolm, among your own people there are not wanting illustrations of the effect of kindness and mutuality in modifying the common selfish nature. Some of your rich manufacturers have tried the experiment of ‘Christian socialism,’ as you call it, with results of great improvement to their industrial community and of money profit to themselves. You may recall

the 'Familistere' of Godin, the Frenchman; and in the United States, I have heard, there are industrial and agricultural societies that are models of harmony, coöperation and contentment. Ah, my dear boy, when the strong man becomes unselfish and tender toward his poor brother, and endeavors to elevate him intellectually and morally; when he realizes the similarity of soul as well as the kinship of blood in those whom fortune has compelled to be hewers of wood and drawers of water in his order of civilization, improvement is sure to follow and the community will take on a brighter, happier condition."

AN INTERNATIONAL QUERY.

"I can see now, venerable father, how a people quite apart from the great mass of the world could advance toward perfection through eschewing in their early career those practices and usages, too common with us, that tend to develop the selfishness of human nature and to lower the moral tone. Yet, how is it that you have been isolated so long? Surely your existence here could not be totally unknown to neighboring peoples. Before the great geologic convulsion there must have been some exchanges of civility at least between yourselves and bordering races. You bought the land from its former occupants, and they would, of course, circulate the fact of your dwelling here. A small people, prospering,

peaceful, with material resources of extraordinary richness, how is it that you have not been invaded, your improvements destroyed, your social establishment ruined, your mines and factories, such as they are, seized and your people, as a country, ‘annexed,’ or made a mere appanage and tributary to the stronger and military nation, ‘for civilization’s sake,’ as a European diplomat might say?”

All of our little party smiled broadly at this question, and the venerable Norris, regarding me with a kind expression, in which a vein of uncertainty as to my object lingered, nodded to one of the council-lors, who took up the conversation :

“Ah, Malcolm, Providence has been on our side. Perhaps eighty years ago we were too insignificant. Now we are walled in by nature. It is easier to get out than in. One can fall down from the ridge top, you know, and roll more or less over the western terraces toward the river.” He said this with a twinkle of irony. “But we are indeed peaceful, hating all animosities and differences that might lead to strife and division. Like the Swiss, in their rough mountains, we are bound closely together by a common affection; by a common tie of interest. Year by year we come closer together, as we the better understand our fortunate relationships, and know the better how to be happy; and, although our family distinctions are well marked and our people are well distributed, for the better occupation and improvement of our territory, we are all brothers

and sisters in cordial feeling, seeing in the conduct and happiness of others our own happiness reflected."

"Then I shall infer, my friends, that one source of your extraordinary success is the mutual altruism, as our philanthropists term it, of your people. You have arrived at that degree of moral perfection that the ordinary selfish feelings of the world have been subdued, and, instead of each looking upon his own things for his own advantage and profit, he looks upon those of others, and wills their betterment rather than his own, which means, of course, the general welfare of your community. But don't you need a system of government, a kind of police or official oversight, to prevent your sympathy and altruism from going too far, and thus becoming a real source of weakness? Why, as it is, you have attained a true anarchism, a most remarkable success in the experiment of doing without an organized system of official control. In our boasted civilization the people rejoice in authority. Our statesmen and politicians will assure you that it means power, energy, the control of the rude and disturbing elements of society, and with its reinforcement of police and military makes the average order-loving citizen among us feel secure in domestic and business affairs."

"Ah, Malcolm," returned the councillor, "government involves authority; to what end? The enforcement of certain propositions called laws. Thus

you would compel people to adjust their conduct to certain standards of practice, imperfect and indefinite enough in their ethical predication. The laws we think sufficient are written in no ordinary book of statutes, but in our soul's conscience. You remember the early Israelites, of whom it is said, 'And He gave them a king in His anger'? Do the serious-minded who follow the commandment of the great King of the Universe need to be governed by some tax-collecting, ordinance-imposing man or set of men? Look abroad—history and experience teach us. Look at Iceland, for generations a peaceful, happy country——"

"Yes, councillor, I remember reading the delightful account of Madam Pfeiffer. It is more like a romance than a recital of truth. But conditions geological are almost the reverse here. Iceland is a land of frowning scenery, rough mountains, ice peaks, and long winters; the people are drawn together by common necessities and the rigors of the location. With you the situation is the very opposite. I have heard that the Icelanders have one policeman, who is maintained not so much because of any use for him as because he represents or symbolizes authority."

"Very likely such an officer, emblem of an effete system, gives pleasure to some of those good folk," returned the councillor, smiling, "but should not the favors of the God of nature stimulate affection and gratitude in the hearts of men? Are we not told

that love is *above* the law? It is not law or any cold, prescriptive course of conduct that we think of, but an affectionate regard for each other, which experience has strengthened and reason has tutored in its expression. If selfishness be at the root of the world's misery for the most part, as you have intimated, Malcolm, here where one is as good as another, and can have as much as another, is there anything to stimulate selfishness?"

"No, it certainly does not appear so to me. Our merchants, brokers, politicians, etc., would pronounce your ways as tame and unstimulating. Your current literature, your bulletins and exchanges would be far from satisfactory to our people. There's nothing of excitement in them; nothing sensational; nothing of the police court or the trial term, with their crass detail of crime and licentiousness; nothing of the racetrack and the sporting field; nothing of intrigues and cabals of political factions; nothing of railway and steamer accidents, with their gory list of injury and death; nothing of state feuds and brutal district rivalries; of war and terrific battles and their unspeakable horrors; of labor strikes, etc., etc.—nothing, in fine, of those startling, disgusting, exasperating things that make up the major part of our newspapers, and pander to the morbid appetites of people."

"Most thankful are we, Malcolm, that our eyes do not encounter such print. Only familiarity, dear boy, could enable you to speak of such unhappy

things so fluently. Think of the effect of reading them upon the mind, especially of the young—how weakening and pernicious in suggestiveness and teaching! Do you realize—your thinking men and women of the North—the extent of the harm done to old and young by such literature as that you have described?"

"I think that I do, dear sir, at least to a degree, and I fear that until a great change is brought about in the moral status of the masses the management of our press will not show a marked improvement in sentiment and conduct. Really, I consider your bulletin sheets interesting, giving, as they do, full accounts of the life in the districts, the scientific, industrial and social events. I read the correspondence on questions of a civil nature, the sketches of individual experience in different lines, with pleasure, and always glean a deal of instruction and heart comfort from every number I take up. There is a healthful glow in the cells of my brain after such reading."

"Happily expressed, my young friend. That is the feeling that reading should produce, and our writers aim to circulate information and views on current topics in such phrase and style as will impart an agreeable uplifting stimulus to mind and nerves. Some have experimented on themselves with the breath plate soon after writing, to ascertain the effect upon the excreting centers. If the plate field show the high-light tone and delicate line distribu-

tion, of which you must know the meaning, they infer that the impression of their statements cannot be otherwise than happy. If they find shaded cross-lines or a hazy dulness in the plate that compare ill with previous trials, they know that the effect of their written thought will not be of the quality they would have it, and so they will revise their composition or produce fresh pieces.”

AN UNLIKELY CONTINGENCY.

“Ah, dear councillor, if our newspaper writers only had some test of the kind!” was my quick exclamation. “Yet I am far from sure that they would try it. But, going back to the old topic, suppose an outbreak in one of your districts of a party who had become disaffected toward the state of affairs——” All in the company shrugged their shoulders at this, and drew slightly away, as if there were sedition in the words. I hesitated.

“Go on, Malcolm, with your hypothesis,” gravely interposed Norris.

“In such a case, where would be your protection: where your remedy to restore harmony, since you have no resource in the way of an organized force to meet and suppress such a movement. Your council board is only advisory, and has no backing of club or gun.”

“Such a thing is scarcely possible now,” said the councillor, with strong emphasis. “You can imag-

ine our anxiety in this respect, dear friend, in the earlier years, when, if any man showed a sign of disquiet he was carefully and kindly consulted about its cause, and as the principles of brotherhood and equality were respected always in such consultations, and no man or company of men assumed to command or lead by virtue of authority, the threatening cloud soon disappeared. What could a fellow-resident among us want? Food? A little effort and the soil yielded an abundant variety. Friendship, brotherly interest, affection? He had but to ask for them in cordial frankness to receive. Was he jealous of others, or envious, because of their higher gift of intellect or natural capacity? We showed him the unwisdom of that, for no higher privileges fell to them on that account, but rather a greater responsibility to their weaker brothers. We thought it right to admire capacity, genius, if you will, in such of our members who showed those qualities. We thanked our Divine Father for giving us men and women of exceptional talent, and at the same time we expected them to do more than the average for our general welfare, and as a rule they have shown the spirit of earnestness in doing dutiful service for the community."

"Your discrimination or lack of discrimination among people has bothered me not a little, gentlemen," I here interposed, breaking upon the quiet flow of the veteran teacher's discourse, "but now I begin to see the true inwardness of your relations as

man to man. Of course, you must appreciate the differences that exist among your people as fully as we North may. To succeed as you have in reconciling or adjusting these differences so as to form a homogeneous community is a very remarkable attainment, no matter what principles, moral or spiritual, have guided your intercourse with each other."

"Yes, my young brother, it would be difficult to explain how we have reached our present condition of unity. We have not all the diversities of type you have, with your great foreign-fed population, yet you must note the persistence of race form and characteristic in our families, showing that a good variety of mental and physical constitution still exists among us, with an attendant variety of capacity and power. Then, too, you have not failed to see the color benign thrown upon conduct and expression by established moral and spiritual habits. Although fraternal and mutual by an assimilation that is almost natural, yet we have not lost our individualities, and purpose not to lose them, for these personal distinctions contribute to the interest and enjoyment of our life."

"Yes, these very differences of character which among us tend to division and inharmony, you appear to have converted to your solidification and unity—quite paradoxical indeed, I am bound to admit. Somewhere in my readings of the eminent evolutionist, Herbert Spencer, of whom you have

doubtless heard, my elder brothers”—all in the group nodded complacently—“he discusses the tendencies of diversity and their effect upon social conditions, and speaks of a ‘heterogeneous homogeneity’ as consistent with good order and progress. Did he know of your community he would doubtless refer to it as a striking evidence of the soundness of his reasoning.”

“We are not quite ready to accept all the views of that eminent writer,” said Willis Hay, another of the company, “for it seems to me that he deals much in reasoning of the hypothetical class and ventures premises that are wanting the just proportion of probability; but of variety and diversity in the constituents of our socialism there is indeed much remaining, notwithstanding our long seclusion from the great world of nations. When you realize, Malcolm, that races like the English, Scotch, French, Dutch, Scandinavian, Irish, Spanish, and even Indians, are represented in our families, you can perceive that there are root elements that resist assimilation, and that we are far from having reached a composite form in either body or mind. Nature is slow to change her primary forms, and is constantly reminding us that it is best not to strive for their modification, but rather to adopt and adapt them intelligently.”

“I believe in the principle, most worthy friend, and that the very happiness of man depends to a good degree upon variety of organization with its

correspondent diversity of expression," was my hasty attempt at corroboration of the wise assertion. The councillor resumed :

"We are not dull in the perception of the differences our people show, and their departures from the line of consistency and self-mastership, but from the fairly understood point of view of their differential constitution we have learned to be tolerant and forbearing, and mutually helpful in the most important respect of self-control. Racial peculiarities continue to impart their interesting color to conduct expression, but the habits of sincerity, truth and useful activity, inculcated in childhood, have been found competent to outgrow and subdue vicious and unhealthful elements that might have been inherited from the parental stock. Your social or communistic undertakings have failed for the most part on the line of coöperation; some individuals were willing to serve and labor, while others took their ease and were content to live on the willing workers. The selfish gainful elements were not entirely laid aside, and there would be outcroppings now and then of assumed authority, leadership or personal privilege unpleasant to the majority. Further, in most of the experiments there was exhibited too much of a lingering fondness for the 'fleshpots' of the old sensuous life, in itself a vexatious hindrance to carrying into full effect the purpose of the undertaking. No; those people, earnest as they might have appeared in the outset, did not 'burn their old

bridges' and resolve to work mightily, heart and hand together and for each other. We soon found that the less of self meant the more for all—the practical consequence of individual respect for our Royal Law."

The worthy speaker ceased, and his impressive words were followed by silence for a time, when the venerable Daniel closed the discussion by a reference to the past :

"If you think, young brother from the outer world, that the lack of a visible government among us is so remarkable, what say you to that reminiscence of Roman history as told by Gibbon, when, following the death of an Emperor, there was a period of eight months when no real government existed, and that eight months was distinguished for its pacific and happy nature. If the great miscellaneous population of Rome could thus hold itself in check and live harmoniously, what would you expect reasonably of a community of people who for generations have cultivated the arts of peace and self-regulation?"

"I can only reply," was my answer, "that the comparison is overwhelmingly in your favor."

CHAPTER XX.

A DISCREET STEP.

THE naturalness of these people was exhibited by the universal fondness for agriculture in some form. Living so near to "nature's heart," they found in the soil an ever fresh inspiration for the simple, normal life which gave them enough of duty and enjoyment for the exercise of all their faculties. As every family had its field and garden, so every one devoted some time almost daily to their culture. When out riding or walking, I would pass old men busy in the vegetable patch, or the housewife zealously watering or training her plants in the house court, or the grown boy pruning the hedge row, or the man scrutinizing his trees and bushes for predacious worms and insects, and occasionally a detail of school children merrily grubbing out the fast-growing weeds that invaded roadway and path. Seeing the cheerful and intelligent tillage applied to their land, one could not entertain surprise that in the course of several generations the inhabited sections had assumed the appearance of a great park set with comfortable houses and their attendant buildings in picturesque distribution. I could not tire of rambling amid such beautiful scenery.

When the sun had declined well toward the western ridges it was the custom of the people generally to come into the open for pastime. If there were any system recognized in their industry it was that seven hours of labor were sufficient, and yet this restriction was not looked at as rigid, for any one could do as he liked; yet whatever was toilsome, that made much demand upon the strength of muscle or nerve, should not, it was commonly believed, be pursued beyond that interval in a single day by any person. On the warm summer days it was not expected—and that term *expected* had the effect in the unwritten code of the country of a social ordinance—that any of the people work under exposure to the meridian sun, and that physical effort during the heated term indoors or out-of-doors would be moderate. In the late afternoon, however, it was assumed that everybody would give attention for some space at least to outdoor exercise, for recreation and neighborly amenity. So the roads and alleys and lanes between sixteen and seventeen hours of the roadside chronometers resounded with the shouts of happy children, and their elders were seen joining in the games or walking in groups in various directions. To me a ramble at this time by the waterside was especially agreeable. In the cool shade of trees there was refreshment more delicious than in a Delmonico sherbet, and the lively chat of a youthful companion added to the enjoyment of the hour. Of the young women, Ellice and Stella most often

walked with me. Latterly Ellice was the more frequent companion. Indeed, her young friend made some show of withdrawing whenever the teacher offered her society, and to a more or less delicate remonstrance would answer in a tone of pique that caused me a little uncertainty whether she were acting a part or not in favor of Ellice.

The manner of the people led me to be more demonstrative in my feelings than was my wont, it must be said, and if my responses to the affectionate address of a girl bred in that frank atmosphere became similar in kind, there was no prurient fancy in their expression. My admiration for Ellice was such that I felt no little satisfaction in her consideration for me; and if I had entertained any thought of the existence of a special sentiment in her breast for me, the affair of the old mine-pit forced the conviction that such thought was not far out of the way. I then determined to make, at the earliest opportunity, such a declaration of my attitude toward the delicate subject of marriage that might prevent a possible complication that later could be embarrassing to both, and perhaps very awkward for me.

“Where are you going now, Malcolm?”

“A little way, Ellice, if you care, down the Vera, and over to the island to listen to the troupials for a little while.”

Ten minutes brought us to the bank of this supposed tributary to the upper waters of the Paraguay, and, crossing on the light and graceful steel

bridge, we were soon upon the mossy turf of the fairy-like island that seemed to float upon the crystal surface of the stream that at this point had widened to three times its breadth, as if to furnish a special lodgement for its islet ward. This little morsel of soil and vegetation was a natural aviary; it was given up to the birds. Any time of the day its trees and bushes were teeming with feathered creatures of varied hues, and their songs and cries filled the warm and fragrant air. Here I found a deal of pleasure in listening to these airy vocalists and watching their movements. An old citron tree on the brink of the stream had in its early growth been bent near the ground at almost a right angle, and later, when cleared of its upper growth for three or four feet, made a rustic bench on which two persons could sit comfortably. This was my lounging place whenever I crossed the Vera to the island, and Ellice and I had sat there together more than once. Now, on reaching the tree, the girl and I took possession of the convenient resting place.

But little had been said during our walk thither. Perhaps what I had been meditating constrained my talk, and if there seemed to be a shade upon Ellice's brow it was but the reflection of my own gravity. The troupials were numerous—more so than usual—and their outbursts of song were incessant, while the black and yellow-coated fellows obtruded their presence in impertinent glee almost within hand's reach. One saucy chap hopped upon a twig so near

to Ellice that she touched his tail ere he sprang away with a whistle of defiance.

“A bold rascal!” I exclaimed. “You might have caught him, Ellice.”

“Perhaps—I did not try.”

“I don’t wonder that the birds are fond of you; they are sagacious enough to know their special friends.”

“These birds, I think, Malcolm, are particularly intelligent. There is one that comes and sits on my window ledge, and I talk to him, and he twitters and whistles as if understanding me. But did you not sigh just now, dear friend?”

“Did I, Ellice? Well, I have been thinking.”

“Thinking! Does thinking make you sigh now?”

“Sometimes when the thought is of things not over-pleasant.”

“May I ask, my dear Malcolm, what that is which is not over-pleasant to you?”

“Certainly, my girl; everything here is so beautiful and charming that I cannot help comparing it with home; and then comes the fateful suggestion that soon—too soon—I must recross that soaring ridge to return to my old place, perhaps never again to see, and rarely ever to hear from, this paradise of earth.”

My face was partly averted as I spoke, yet with a side glimpse of the girl’s face. Her eyes were bent upon the water flowing gently by. I saw the color in her cheek fade suddenly and her bosom heave

tremulously. Then she turned those lustrous, frank eyes upon me.

“And must you go so soon?”

The voice was steady, but so low that had I not been close to her I could not have caught the words.

“Not immediately, to be sure, Ellice; yet, when one’s duty and work come into mind, and the season of activity for those in my line of business is opening, I cannot help giving heed to the prompting.”

“Oh, Malcolm, have you thought——”

The voice was still low, and toned with a rich, deep earnestness that thrilled me as never Lucia in her most passionate outburst had moved my appreciative feeling. I waited for the completion of the sentence, but she turned away those liquid eyes silently and sat like a statue, gazing in the distance.

“Perhaps, dear friend, I feel your meaning. I have thought——”

“Oh,——” and those deep eyes rested on mine for an instant, and again were gazing away. It was well, for, with that gaze on my face, it were doubtful whether my courage would have sustained my purpose. As it was, after a moment’s pause I went on:

“Yes, many a time have I thought of what might be possible between us—you and me, Ellice. I should be a hypocrite not to own it, and yet, when the fact obtruded itself that you, in form and being, soul and body, were of a type so much above——”

“No,——” the girl sprang up; “Malcolm, no;

say not so. You wrong yourself. If I have indulged feelings as a woman that I never quite felt before, it has been of my own heart's prompting. But what am I saying?"

She had faced me as she started to her feet, with one hand clasping the exquisitely molded neck and the other extended in the pose of entreaty, while the warm blood flushed deeply in cheek and chin. I could not resist the impulse to start from my seat and take her extended hand.

"Dear Ellice, to you I owe my best enjoyments here where my every hour has been filled with happy experiences, and most surely will my soul treasure the kindness and affection so frankly given, and, may I say—can I say, how much will be the regret of leaving you?"

Gently withdrawing her hand, she placed her finger-tips upon my lips, while her dark eyes filled with tears. There we stood, face to face, for a few seconds in silence. No line of reproach marked her sweet face, made sweeter now by the tears that dropped from the open lids and trickled down over the soft cheek. My own flowed, too, and dimmed my vision. Finally she spoke first:

"We knew that you could not stay, Malcolm, but was it wrong to indulge even a hope? Perhaps you can return to us—but now 'tis for us a parting indeed, dear friend—yes, dear friend ever in memory—though in my heart I will keep repeating 'a happy meeting soon.' "

She was so near, her parted lips so full and rich with the fervid current of life, that I bent over and touched them with my own.

“Let this seal our friendship, dear girl.” Without moving she received this tribute of regard, the color going and returning in the clear skin. Then, throwing up her hands, she grasped my face between them and stood for a little gazing into my eyes as if to read my inmost soul. What deep eyes were hers? Their brown irises seemed to expand to the full width of the open lids and glow with a brilliancy beyond the human! What strength, too, in those small hands! For the moment I felt weak under that gaze and pressure. What man of any pretense to delicacy and tenderness would not have felt as I did, so close to and so caressed by so beautiful and true a woman. But the precious moments sped, too sweet to last. With a deep sigh she closed those marvelous eyes, and then pressed her lips to mine—a long kiss, the only one I ever had from her. Gently removing her hands from my face, Ellice turned silently away. Then came the sweet, low peal of the evening Angelus. The sun had dropped upon the ridge. In whispered accents we repeated the beautiful formula of prayer—for her, for me, an opportune message of grace and consolation. “Father Divine,” she added, “be with our friend wherever he may go; keep him safely when absent from us.”

“Amen!” I murmured, and continued: “Keep

safely, Lord of all grace, this dear girl, and let her joy be full to the overflowing."

Returning to Bruces' we were met at the doorway by Stella, who cried:

"How you two people have lagged along! Here we are all at the table! You must have been much entertained by each other."

The girl's sally drew no return fire, as customary, for I was in no mood for badinage, and Ellice's face, though cheerful, wore an expression of deep pensiveness. Noting this, the lively girl added:

"Well, now, have you seen more snakes on the island—or something worse? I thought of sending Jabber in pursuit of you, but, you know, he's so funny about crossing running water."

"We have seen no snakes, my Stella," ventured Ellice, placing an arm around her, "but I have seen what seems of much greater concern than anything reptilian—a vision of the inevitable."

In answer to this remark the girl looked wonderingly at Ellice and then at me, evidently quite at loss to understand her teacher friend's remark, but as the expression of gravity on her face did not change, she exclaimed:

"You poor, darlingest darling, come in and have supper with us, and dream of your great-great-grandfather to-night, if you will."

The thoughtful expression melted into a smile at this outburst of grotesque tenderness, and the two, embracing, followed me into the house.

CHAPTER XXI.

FROM HOME AND OLIVE.

THE "raven mail" had brought me letters from home, which I found on my table on going up after supper. The reader will remember the ravens that carried down from the ridge certain conveniences just before the ascent of that natural barrier and my entrance into Oudemont. Those ravens and others trained for the purpose were a sort of special messengers and mail-carriers. The letter sent by the very few agents of the country who might be traveling somewhere in the "outer sphere" were directed to the small plantation settlement called Vadera by its proprietor, at which I saw my guide, Julius. It was assumed by the Bolivian official, who united in one person collector of customs and postman for that thinly occupied region on the Brazilian frontier, that the small packages addressed "Guapore Ridges, *via* Vadera" he at rather long intervals carried to the hacienda, were for a party of miners or herdsmen, whose eccentricity was shown by their training a raven to carry messages. "Wise as a raven" was often heard in the talk of my new friends, a curious substitute that had not to me the euphemism of the more familiar "Wise as an owl;"

yet a few weeks of Oudemon life satisfied me that there was good reason for the substitution of raven for owl. They had found a use for "the bird of ill-omen," and he had shown a precocity and fidelity in response to their care and training that have never, to my knowledge, been exhibited by any specimen of the wide-eyed night marauders.

In many families the raven was fully domesticated as a messenger for the women, much as the nimble monkey was employed by the men. Naturally, when this feature of their practice became known to my observation, I inquired why they did not use pigeons, and learned that there were no pigeons in the country. A little experience satisfied me that the raven was the better bird for their purposes; although slower of flight than our carrier he was much stronger on the wing and a surer servant, not fearing any of the larger birds of the plain and mountain.

One of the letters was from Olive:

"MY DEAR MALCOLM: I was rejoiced when your letter came. Two entire months since your departure, and the only word directly to the girl you were wont to call 'my confidante.' Being so little of the traveler and unused to the peculiar and often absorbing things that are met in strange countries, I cannot appreciate their effect upon one's attention; but I know your disposition to study whatever proves interesting, especially in human life, and try

to extenuate the seeming neglect of friends at home. From your description of the countries and peoples through which you passed on the way southward, you must have had incident enough to fill your time and thought. Everything so novel, and so unexpected, and then your constant march, could have scarcely allowed you time to draw a deep breath, much less to write letters. There was no elaborately furnished club to drop into by the way, with desk and stationery in sight to invite easy use.

“You were a good boy, though, to remember your mother as you have when opportunity has offered, and your lines, though brief, have given her no little solace. The last message, dated ‘On the Gua-pore,’ and sent by your guide on his return westward, had much of mystery in it; but the assurance that you would soon be among friends, and ‘do not entertain any anxiety if you do not hear from me but seldom until I start on the homeward course,’ led her to say: ‘Well, I suppose it will be as it was when he went to Egypt and got among so many attractive things; he will forget us, until he wakes up some fine morning and finds so little money in his belt that he does not know whether he can pay expenses until he gets among people who speak English.’

“You tell me that the folks into whose arms you have fallen don’t use money. I wonder how they can get along. At any rate, you will save yours while there. It seems to me it must be a very prim-

itive country compared with ours—everything so fresh, and simple, and true. I don't wonder at your admiration; but to my inexperienced intelligence there is a vein of romance in your description of the customs and character of the men and women you meet. To find a community of that sort in the heart of a continent we have been accustomed to regard as but half-civilized at best—are you not 'jolly-ing' us? Then those girls you give us a 'snap shot' of—certainly they must be *charming*. You must fetch home some photos of them, or, better, a real life specimen for us to see and admire. That would make quite a sensation here—our inveterate bachelor, Malcolm, bringing home a (you do not tell us of the race or consanguinity, and our imagination cannot supply the lacking term) bride from the wilds of Brazil, or Paraguay, or Argentine, or whatever the country you have strayed into.

"Many have been the inquiries about you. The Sealings were in yesterday. Madeline was quite earnest in her demands as to when you were expected home, and two or three others in our set have intimated their opinion that you must find those Indians or mestizo girls very charming to stay so long among them. There is a deal of quite amusing curiosity entertained by everybody regarding your wanderings; so, when you do return, expect to be bombarded with questions.

"At any rate, come back to us with all your old self unimpaired, and you may be sure you will find

no change in the regard of your friends, some of whom feel your absence perhaps more than you think.

“There are rumors of trouble and revolution in Colombia. You will not, dear Malcolm, venture in that direction or expose yourself to any dangers unnecessarily on the return trip. You know the character of those uncertain people. The *petit mère* is quite well, and also the sisters. George grumbles about what you can find to do or see ‘down there,’ and affects to believe that you are ‘spinning too much yarn’ in your account of the sagacity of Jabber. . .

“I am sure that you have a good work in hand and will come to us ere long much profited by your travel and experiences; and your friends, too, will be gainers by what you have learned in that strange country. Ever most sincerely. OLIVE.”

The dear girl! Her kind message had come at a time most opportune. My feelings had never been so wrought up before as by the interview with Ellice. Her distress had shown too clearly the depth of her regard for me, and, while in the rare nobility and generosity of her nature and habit she absolved me from any dishonorable or unmanly thought or purpose in my relations to her, I could not avoid some self-reproach. Had I maintained a cooler and less responsive attitude, there would not have grown so strong a sentiment. Yet, considering all the circumstances, the ways of the people, the independence

of the women in affairs of the heart, their unusual intelligence and fairness in matters of social communication, the unwitting indiscretion of a stranger would doubtless find many apologists if the matter should become known. In reading Olive's letter there settled upon my spirit a refreshing calmness. She had never written in such terms to me before; *i.e.*, never had given so clear a view of her own heart; for, back of the affected badinage, I was sure that I read the true story of an earnest affection for me.

Pensively I sat for some time, the open letter in one hand, and drifted into a comparison of the two girls, with surprise noting a marked similarity in many qualities. Ellice was the more liberally endowed with charms of form and feature, and more advanced in those lines of esthetic culture that strongly attract a man of taste; but Olive's large gray-brown eyes softly beamed with as much frankness and her well-balanced expression evinced a similar habit of considerate reflection. She was on occasion generous and self-sacrificing to a fault, yet exemplary in foresight and prudence, and in emergencies exhibited uncommon self-control and executive capacity. Strong in will, she was nevertheless modest and delicate in demeanor, impressing most persons who did not know her with the idea that she was diffident and yielding. She was sensitive, craved kindness and attention from others, and toward her friends always manifested a stanch

loyalty. Honest and pure in every motive and thought, she expected others in expression and conduct to be honest and pure, and her respect was colored by the tone of character she saw in others.

I suspected that there had been something of a disappointment in her early maidenhood regarding a certain young man of handsome physique and brilliant mind, whose life as known to his male intimates was darkened by habits or indiscretions of a vicious nature too common among our bright young men. Once possessed of a knowledge of his moral irregularity, Olive's white soul could not but recoil from further contact with him, however it might strain the cords of her heart. This experience, or whatever else the trial might have been, imparted a tender phase to her character and softened certain forceful elements that previously tended to show their color when her feelings were strongly aroused. Now, at full maturity of mind and body, we who knew her truly, deemed her worthy of any station in social life; and I am not reluctant to admit that her acquaintance exerted not a small influence upon my bachelor course.

Again I read the letter slowly, its tender lines suggesting other reflections, and at the end I uttered half aloud: "Noble, charming girl, how precious your sympathy and cheer is to me! What a friend I have in you! May we not be even more than friends in the near future?"

A tap at the doorway. I said "Enter, friend,"

and Stella tripped in. Stopping short and eyeing me closely, the girl burst out :

“I am glad you feel better, big cousin ; something in that letter (I still held Olive’s missive in my hand) that helps ? You were so pitiful-looking at supper that I wanted to try to do something for you. If it was about Ellice—yes—oh, I am so sorry, but I know you meant well. Excuse me, dear cousin ; I am only a little girl to you, but I love you as one of my dear friends, you know.”

She had caught up my hand and gazed, while speaking, into my face, her pure eyes dilating with interest. Pressing the small brown fingers caressingly, I answered :

“You are a little sister of mercy and consolation, my dear Stella. Thank you for such full sympathy, and I shall take you into my confidence”—holding up the letter—“but not just now. Perhaps to-morrow we will talk. I need a little time yet for reflection.”

“To-morrow ’twill be better, cousin Malcolm, for Stiles Morgan is here and wants to look over your goalone. He has another improvement to put on it, and then we’ll try it, won’t we?”

“Certainly, *ma petite*. We’ll go right down to see the good fellow.”

CHAPTER XXII.

IN A LABORATORY WITH ITS MASTER.

SHORTLY before my leaving home for this visit to Oudemont our newspapers had given more or less exciting accounts of a strange insect of the beetle variety that had become the terror of communities in Georgia and the Carolinas. Its bite or sting was said to be fatal in nearly every case. The mortality among children, due to its malignancy, was most alarming. The virus of its bite acted so rapidly that very few of the victims could receive treatment in season to have effect, if any, in counteraction. Then, too, the ignorance of the medical profession with regard to the nature of the insect put the practitioner at so great a disadvantage that no treatment offered much hope of benefit. The antidotes or antiseptics used in rattlesnake, cobra, adder, tarantula and other like poisoning were without efficacy; so that resort was had to the prophylaxis of exterminating the offensive creature, organized efforts being set on foot to find and destroy it.

The confident way in which Percy had consulted Lewis Pentersoe in behalf of Ellice led me to that learned gentleman, or rather, according to the vogue, "studious brother," thinking that he might advise

a method of treatment of some efficacy. Stopping at Pentersoe's house while on a round with my go-alone, I was conducted by his mother to the laboratory, finding him there deeply engaged upon an analysis of water from a recently discovered spring. Praying him to continue his work, as I was not hurried, I sat down and chatted with the old lady until the chemist had reached a stage that made it convenient to suspend his procedure. Meanwhile my eyes had been roving over the equipment of the large room and were surprised by the number and variety of the instruments and the quantity of materials assembled there. From my recollection of Northern laboratories, it seemed to me that this workshop of an unpretending Oudemont chemist and botanist exceeded them all for convenience and completeness.

There was even a rack in a side alcove with an array of tubes, glasses and microscopes. In many of the tubes there were syrupy-looking masses and cotton-like stoppers, which were recalled years afterward by the culture apparatus for bacteria employed by our biologists. Upon the walls hung bookshelves with many volumes whose titles in the common style to which I was accustomed indicated that they had come from the outside world. There were treatises on chemistry, physiology, histology, anatomy, etc., with authors' names that had been met with in my reading. Verily, the science and learning of our

civilization were respected here and applied with evident intelligence.

A singular combination of glass and polished metal tubing, with cylindrical vessels and alembic-like expansions on appropriate stands, held my attention for a while. Its beauty and intricacy evidenced a procedure of unusual delicacy, and prompted inquiry as to its nature when opportunity might offer.

Mother Pintersoe and I were still chatting when Lewis remarked:

“Am gratified, friend Malcolm, to observe your interest in our surroundings here.”

“Ah, my dear Lewis, I have a curious disposition for novelty, as you have detected, although your surroundings appear to combine both things that have been met with North and others quite new to me. You have a finely equipped workroom, I must say.”

“So you think it compares favorably with those in your country?”

“Yes, indeed. I am sure many an institution among our universities would be considered fortunate with such a plant for research as you, a simple Oudemonite, if you will pardon the phrase, possess. When the expense of furnishing this room is considered——”

“Expense—how?”

“Oh, I had forgotten that you dear folks make no account of cost. As students of nature’s secrets

you have a sort of *carte blanche* for whatever of appliance or material you may need."

"Well, Malcolm," he returned, laughing, "it may be so. But do you mean to say that your men of science, performing work of value to the community on economic and moral lines, are not amply sustained by the community?"

"Few, indeed, I regret to say, are compensated or encouraged to apply their talent and learning as they would most gladly."

"This is strange enough, considering what talent and learning your people have," pointing as he spoke to his bookshelves. "Here with us, my work, like the work of anyone else, is made a common cause, all helping in some respect to sustain me and other chemists; my success in a given course of experiment or analysis becomes the success of Oudemont."

"Verily, an ideal scientific association. How many of our devoted naturalists, chemists, biologists, would rejoice to know your freedom! But, to be a little more pertinent, Lewis, may I ask what is this apparatus?" pointing at the complex system of tubes and vessels which I lately mentioned.

"That, Malcolm, is a later form, perhaps improved, of apparatus for the preparation of the best solution used on our breath plates. Here is some of its product." Taking from a redwood cabinet a small crystal flask, he exhibited a fluid of blue color that seemed to flash in the light. "This is much

more sensitive to actinic effects than the solution heretofore in use, while fresh; but for the purpose of its preparation improves with age if kept well corked and in the dark," he said, replacing it in the cabinet after my brief inspection.

Mother Pentersoe here arose, saying: "Now, my dear young friend, "you have launched my Lewis on a favorite theme; will you excuse me? And, my son, do not tire your visitor by too much discourse on that topic."

"I shall try not to do that, dear mother."

"Ah, dear madam," I added to the filial assurance, "do not be concerned for me. I am at home as a listener to the theories of these zealous students of nature, and never tire of hearing them, especially when their investigations affect human nature."

"You see, mother, our good friend gives me abundant latitude, and you shall have another turn, for he will take noon refreshment with us."

"Certainly, it must not be otherwise," returned the mother, pleasantly, as she retired from the laboratory. I resumed the talk with:

"The little while I have been here, professor—that's the title we should give you up our way——"

"I cannot doubt your sincerity, Malcolm," he interrupted quickly but gently.

"I was not thinking of compliments, my friend of tubes and filters, but of the merit and value of such ability as yours to the scientific world; and I was about to say that my inquisitive eyes have seen

so many unusual things in this laboratory that I am almost prompted to ask you many questions aside from the main purpose of my visit."

"Ask what you please, Malcolm, it will be a pleasure to answer, if in my power."

"Ah, Lewis, the savant of Oudemon, is none the less an Oudemonite for being a savant. Well, I came, as you doubtless surmise, intending to inquire about the remedy you used in Ellice Denton's case, when she was poisoned by the viper."

"You are right, Malcolm. It is a species of viper, an echisoid of peculiar venom, exceeding the Mediterranean species. I obtained the specimen and made an analysis of its secretion, and also a culture, which you may see in the tube yonder—Number 6—a very rare spirillum, identical with that shown by my beloved teacher, Fortil, who lies in yonder Silence," extending a hand reverently in the direction of the House of Hope. "Have you any reptiles like that North? There are your adder and copperhead, to be sure."

"And our famous rattlesnake, and certain spiders and insects that are much feared," I added. "Of such derivatives as you have there in the glass I know very little, but think that the remedy you employ to antidote a bite may be of use to us."

"Very likely, Malcolm, and it is probable that your botanists know a plant cognate to that, the reduced sap of which would be efficacious. It is the *ecchofis*. The best part for the purpose is the fresh

root. We apply the remedy to the wound, and also give it, much diluted, in small doses internally. Allow me to prepare a phial of the extract for you?"

"Should be much obligated, Lewis."

With a shake of the large head and its profusion of light brown hair, he went on: "In the Tube 7, which you may compare with 6," taking up the two tubes and holding them in the light, "I have a culture of the echisoid neutralized by ecchofis. You notice in this the intensely deep blue nidus and lines of patchy growth radiating upward through the banana syrup. In this other you see that the nucleus is but a transparent film and the patches are scarcely discernible—the excellent action of the ecchofis done in a few hours upon a growth like this of 6."

"Admirable, my dear Pentersoe; and these other tubes—do you experiment, for instance, with tubercle, or the germs of anthrax or yellow fever—great topics of discussion in our bureaus of public sanitation at home?"

"No, my brother in pursuit of useful knowledge, I have no opportunity in that way. Archbold, indeed, brought me on his late return a crystal of supposed yellow fever infection, but I could make little of it; could not obtain a distinct and altogether satisfactory resultant."

"Did you test them on animals for effect?"

"No; certainly not," he answered in an indignant vein, "we cannot subject our animal creatures to any cruelty under pretext of experiment for the good

of humanity. And yet," he continued, smiling, "we have no apology for it, because a case of infective or malignant disease is practically unknown among us nowadays. A howler recently imported died over in district eleven, and I made an examination to learn the cause. The liver showed a state of gross breakdown, the tissues being generally marked with deep ulceration. Under the microscope there appeared features similar in many respects to the substance in the tube that Archbold had given me. I tried the ecchafis on both the imported and my liver preparation. The specimens are here," taking two tubes from the rack. "Do you perceive much difference in the reactions?"

I examined them carefully with a magnifier. A similar distribution of pearl-gray patches appeared in the glory fluid of each.

"No; I can see no difference."

"There is very little seen except with a high power."

INSANITY IN THE TEST TUBE.

"But these other tubes placed by themselves"—I pointed to a group at one end of the rack.

"Those, Malcolm, are tests of disturbed mental states, obtained from the few cases of insanity we have."

"Possible! that you find germs of a specific nature in insanity! And have you the antitoxic or antidote for them?"

Pentersoe smiled, and, with a light laugh, replied: "We have no antitoxic in the sense you probably mean, my brother. These are abstracts from breath plates, treated as cultures, for the purpose of obtaining distinct results that will indicate the character of the mind impairment, and enable us to attempt its restoration. Our insane cases are so few because of the hygiene of prevention operative in our general life; and these are as a rule harmless, and, with but a single exception—a very aged woman—of some use where they live. You notice, Malcolm, the different colors. Certain dominating elements in the manifestation of faculty are correspondent with them. Here, for instance, is a person whose mind is affected by delusions of pride, greatness and authority. You see blotches of deep violet. This tube is from the sweat glands, and confirms the breath plate, taken at the same time, and has its reaction in the tube set next to it. This tube," showing another, "is from the blood; the color is stronger, but means the same thing."

"Then 'blood will tell,' as we say, Lewis?"

"Without a doubt, when analyzed in the proper manner, dear brother. Among your medical men there are some who appear to believe that analysis of the blood will show conditions of health and disease, and help to decide the nature of one's sickness. In my opinion, they are right, and before many years it will probably be a common thing for the physician to examine his patient's blood, just as he

now looks at temperature and pulse. This glass illustrates what your doctors call chronic melancholia."

"What, my profound expert in tempers! You don't mean that you have such an unfortunate among your people!"

"Ah, Malcolm, you are a good discerner of spirits," he said, smilingly, and continued: "Bross Champlin—you may know him——"

"Engineer and statistician? Yes——"

"The same. He was at Trinidad not long ago, and saw the poor man, and obtained some tears, which he brought me as a matter of curious inquiry. You will note their reactions—the dark green lines of suspicion and distrust, and a low, habitual cunning that might be unsafe to those around him. An interesting contrast is this one, from our own small supply of specimens—a case of excessive generosity."

"Which I can readily accept, Lewis. How intense the yellow! Looks as if there were gold in it. But your people's prodigality does not scatter the yellow metal about as our over-liberal son of Fortuna would; they give themselves to others. It is a wonder that in the way your people live that you don't have a sort of epidemic or craze of generosity most of the time."

"I know, my dear Malcolm, that you can understand how the universal interchanges and mutual nature of our life operate as a corrective of tenden-

cies to excess in any direction. The idea of duty has its relation to the habits of our people and exercises a good degree of restraint. Our children grow up with the principle ingrained in their conduct that they can expect from others what they are expected to give; that is, in other terms, reciprocity of kindness, sympathy and service is the moral, or better, the spiritual rule governing everybody's intercourse with everybody else. Resultantly excess of service for another's benefit carries no credit or approval. Superfluity is unreasonable. Yes, I appreciate what you would suggest. We have some admiration for zeal and enthusiasm in directions that affect the general good, but the teaching our children get regarding their conduct toward each other and the normal action of moral sentiment renders them quite early self-governing and temperate to a good degree in the expression of interest and feeling. Do you find people disposed to annoy or overcrowd you with attentions, Malcolm?"

"Now you have asked the question, excellent and studious brother, I will confess that my opinion has changed from what was my first impression. When I entered the country two months or so ago I felt as if overwhelmed with kindnesses, but now I find myself no longer 'the lion'—as we term a man among us who is the recipient of special and constant attentions from nearly everybody—but the subject of little more than the consideration that one Oudemontite gives to another as a matter of course.

I can assure you that to be treated on the common ground of equality is quite gratifying. It makes me feel at home. What have you in those phials?" pointing to another group, the contents of which gleamed in the light.

"Those are recent products, Malcolm; effects obtained in the treatment of blood."

"Human blood?"

Pentersoe inclined his head.

HOW BLOOD WILL TELL.

"Now, excuse my curiosity—always active, you see, Lewis. May I inquire their significance?"

"I am not able to answer fully, Malcolm, as the observations are new. Two or three of us are working in this line, and with encouragement. Briefly, we think that, just as the breath plate shows conditions of mind, the general trend of sentiment, etc., so the blood elements may exhibit the physiologic basis of the mental state. We cannot say that there is a positive standard of blood perfection, for scarcely two specimens are precisely alike in color and form; indeed, we are satisfied that there are many types of normal blood, each fundamental to a normal type of mental constitution."

"Just as people normally organized show a great variety of intellectual and moral capacity," I interposed.

"Yes, brother. Now it is best to illustrate while I

talk. Here is one tube. You notice how bright the flashing. Let us see what the microscope will do with it.” Removing the stopper, a drop of the ruddy fluid was carefully transferred to a slide, and that placed under the lens. A few turns of the screw brought the object into focus. “Now study this for a moment, before it changes in the air.”

I put my best eye to the instrument, and saw a beautiful spectacle—blood disks swimming in a clear fluid, apparently about the diameter of a marrow-fat pea. Their edges were distinct and regular, with ray-like filaments fringing the entire circumference. The body of the disks was plump and translucent, exhibiting two or three nuclear elements of varied form; while over the surface of the disk a symmetrical net-like membrane appeared to be spread, the meshes of which I could almost count. The uniformity of the structure and clear golden color won upon my gaze, but alas! too soon the chemistry of the atmosphere began its destructive work, and the charming picture lost color and form, the markings disappearing in a blurred mass.

“Beautiful!” I exclaimed. “The most remarkable view of blood elements that I have ever seen!”

“Try another, and see the difference.” He placed a second slide under the glass—or rather crystal, for the compound lens of Pentersoe’s microscope was of white topaz—and what a change! The corpuscles were large, but much less bright in color, the fringed edges were irregular, at parts twisted and

broken. Dark spots appeared on the body of the disks, their network lacked the symmetry of the first specimen, and the nuclear contents seemed of rough outline.

"Here is one more," said this master of technique. "Compare it with the two you have seen."

This slide at first glance looked like the first examined; later I noted differences. Here and there were disks quite perfect in constitution and beautiful in tint; others showed departures from symmetry and completeness of border and content, and some were much like those of the second slide. The general effect, however, was pleasing, and offered a study upon which I could have dwelt for half an hour, but in three minutes the field was but a semi-evaporated splash of granular indistinctness. Looking up from the instrument with traces of vexation doubtless on my face, Lewis said, deprecatingly:

"We must make our observation quickly, brother Malcolm, for as yet we cannot fix the specimens, and then, any treatment, I think, would impair them. The first slide is blood of a good average quality, such as you will find in the veins of most of our grown-up people. The second is from the arm of a man who not long ago was unfortunate in permitting certain elements in his nature to become too active, to the disadvantage of his conduct toward others. In fine, he became disagreeable and selfish in the discharge of certain duties that he had undertaken for his district. It was feared that this brother

would become so disturbed mentally as to be unbalanced. Good advice had its effect, and, being willing, he received our experimental treatment, also—only experimental. One of your neighbors, whose blood is of high quality, offered a sample of it for our use."

" 'Twas Ellice, I dare affirm—a most harmonious nature—and I remember a remark of hers that this explains."

The chemist smiled at my outbreak: "Would you like to see the tube in which her blood—the few drops left—is kept?"

"Most certainly. I am feeling quite bloodthirsty to-day, you see, brother Lewis."

"With my connivance, Malcolm, you must allow."

Taking a minute flask from a recess in the cabinet which contained the ecchofis, he showed me what was indeed a small sample of our vital current, yet still limpid and cherry-red.

"You may judge from its character," he remarked, "from what you saw in the tube yonder; only it has a higher gleam, and the disks are even fuller, more concave in outline, and longer cilia, showing a great vital sympathy."

"Yes, the whole Denton family is remarkable for freshness and capacity in a vital sense, my dear master of blood mixtures; such symmetry of form and balance of action are far from common, even among your people."

"Some must be different from others, my dear boy; it were better for the others."

"The order of a beneficent economy—and she gave her blood for the regeneration, so to speak, of that erring brother?"

"Yes."

"It was injected by syringe?"

"A vein in the arm was opened and a half dozen drops introduced at a time, until in the course of a month there were five injections. The Tube 3, shown you, Malcolm, is his blood after the fourth injection—a great change."

"Remarkable! You people are more sanguinary than I supposed, after all."

"And his character-expression has altered much for the better," continued this novel biologist, without regard to my interjection, aside from a slight lifting of the brows."

"I have heard as much, my dear blood reformer; and he has quite won the confidence of the people in his district again? Dear me, I wish that about a pint of that precious stuff were injected into my system!"

Lewis laughed, and said banteringly:

"Would it not be well, Malcolm, to try a mixture of several types for a general, all-round effect?"

"Why not? A good suggestion for complete manhood surely. But I am not quite clear on the rationale of this character-amending process, Lewis. I can understand how some improvement in the

physical condition might result from your injection. Accepting that the blood contains minute forms—bacilli, cocci, or what not, do you mean to say that among them are elementary bodies that have a casual function in the play of mental faculty, giving to character normal or abnormal coloring?"

SPIRIT AND MATTER IN SERUS COMBINATION.

"We are of opinion, my young metaphysical inquisitor, that the life fluids contains elements, both psychic and physical, and that it is just as rational to introduce substance for the correction of a vice or weakness of the mental nature into the circulation as to inject a solution—a serum, as your savants term it—to counteract a process of disease, a poison or a fever. With a microscope of higher power than that I can show you some of the minute forms in blood, which, I am convinced, have a decided relation to our moral states, such is their behavior in certain mental affections. Your physiologists, if I have heard correctly, have among them some who declare that the micro-organisms that enter into our structures are not without special properties, even peculiar instinctive aptitudes. Nay, more; some assert that these infinitely small entities show powers of a psychic order and are endowed with instinct or intelligence beyond that of exhibiting only degrees of cellular irritability. I could quote from authors on that shelf to show that these minute creatures

manifest phases of conduct that can be explained by their possessing acute sensibility. They show choice in their diet and associate relations, and the phenomena of defence or self-protection. One of those writers, in speaking of the wonderful process of generation, says that the sperm cell is animated by the same sexual instincts that direct the parent organism toward the male. If this sperm cell did not possess a psychic life, how could a father transmit his form, features, disposition, etc., to his child? asks another student of biology, and so he naturally infers that all the attributes in man—form, feature, every faculty—exist as latent potentials in the original germ."

"Then may come the application of the principle involved in this theory, which you, my dear friend, have just mooted. If we find by a study of the individual germ its peculiar habits and tendencies, may we not also discover why it has qualities that may contribute to the unhappiness and evil of the person to whom it belongs; and, having learned this, may we not learn also how to treat it, to train and modify its nature so that from being a means directly or relatively of evil and unhappiness, it may be potent for the harmony and good of its owner? Introducing, then, the blood of a person known for exceptional harmony and beauty of life and moral integrity into the circulation of another whose habits and tendencies have peculiarities that are uncertain and irregular, the germal source of that other's

character-weakness is reached, and a psychic change is brought about to the advantage of the individual. Is the idea illogical, my young brother?"

"Wonderful, indeed, noble wielder of the syringe," I replied to his enthusiastic address, "and yet quite logical because it is but a higher extension of the principle of grafting, applying what everybody accepts as important in fruit culture, to human culture. And why not? I most heartily wish that that such a method of treating inveterate dishonesty, vice and crime were known among my people. Some of our zealous scientists have urged what seems to me an extreme and most dangerous method —yet our surgeons, as you may know, are capable of doing things now with success that but a few years ago would have been denounced as revolting butchery and necessarily fatal. They appear to believe that it is quite possible to operate upon a man's nervous system, and by removing certain parts or 'centers' effect a radical change in the disposition—indeed, transform one of a fractious and wicked nature to amicability and goodness."

"We have heard of that, Malcolm, and do not approve it because such an operation would deprive a person of a part of his essential organism, and so impair his functional integrity."

"I think that I understand you; that a man needs all his nerve matter for the perfect expression of himself. Your method is certainly better, and has no dangerous features. As our people are politically

and socially constituted it would be a long time before its systematic application would be permitted, however great were the advantages."

"I must confess, Malcolm, that I consider this method largely experimental as yet, and only to be employed when other means, more humane and admirable, fail. Thus far the instances of its use have been too few, and it is very likely that in the course of a generation our national advance in spiritual energy will be beyond any pretext for such quasi surgery of the mind."

"Most scrupulous experimenter. There is nothing like good blood for both body and soul, and this proposition certainly has an admirable example in our young friend, Ellice Denton. Changing the tenor of our conversation somewhat, it seems remarkable to one with my Northern impressions that the domestic future of that excellent girl had not been settled long before this. She must have admirers among the young men."

"She has, Malcolm, and more than one quite suitable, I think, to her. Percy and I are close friends—hence the affairs in that charming home are somewhat known to me. There's young Lomas Dexter, a fine fellow, who would give his life for her, if necessary; but so far as I can tell Ellice is not ready to surrender her maidenhood, and her parents do not urge it."

"This Lomas I do not remember having seen, although Stella Bruce has mentioned him."

"Dexter lives in an eastside district, thirty-four;

is of a studious, reserved nature; something of an archæologist, and knows a deal about trees; but a fine fellow indeed. Ellice really likes him, Willis says, yet I am thinking the young man does not push matters, for he is as sensitive as a girl in this regard. As for Ellice I am sure that the lucky fellow who secures her will have a willing partner of his joys and sorrows."

"Presto, Lewis, do you venture to hint at a shady side in your Oudemont life? Are you going to suggest at this late hour in my happy experience of its course anything savoring of disenchantment or delusion?"

"Ah, my ironical brother, to all things human, whatever the estate, there come occasions of sadness and regret. We are not free from them, yet such is the prevailing cheer and sympathy and love among us, in the sorrows that must come there is a flavor of joy."

"Which makes them sweeter to the uplifted soul than even its unalloyed joys;" I felt impelled to add, and rising: "I have occupied you, my excellent Lewis, far too long, and should——"

"No, Malcolm; do not, I pray you, think that you have intruded upon me—now you are not going, for it was understood that we were to have you for dinner——"

"Of course," said mother Pintersoe, entering the laboratory, "our young friend joins our little table company—we cannot permit him to run away now, when everything is quite ready."

CHAPTER XXIII.

AIR SWIMMING AND SCIENCE.

THE hot prelude to the rainy season had come, and there was little comfort in traveling when the sun was high, so that I was abroad either in the early or late hours of the day. Ellice had gone to visit friends in a distant quarter, and also to attend a conference of teachers, and would be absent several days. I was not averse to this, of course, for in my state of mind it was better not to have much to do with her. If Stella had astonished me by her accurate insight the evening after my interview with her beloved friend and teacher, she still more surprised me by the gentleness of her treatment later. Not yet mature in years, nevertheless in this affair of the heart I found her an excellent counselor, and was convinced that no better go-between could be found to establish what diplomats term a *modus vivendi* between Ellice and myself, if a mutual friend were at all needed. The young girl archly said: "Indeed, cousin Malcolm, I thought you two were made for each other, and it would be a good thing to have you marry and stay among us, and you must forgive me if I have done or said anything that helped to make you think more of each other

than was just right, considering that you had only come here to visit us." Unconsciously the girl had been playing in a small way the part of a match-maker, and with the best intentions for all concerned. As for Ellice, could I think reasonably that with her age and experience she had been over influenced by her effusive pupil?

"To-morrow as early as convenient, dear folks, will take place our quarterly ascension for the purpose of high observations," remarked Bruce the elder. We were at the supper table. Looking with inquiry in my eye, while I balanced a nut biscuit on my forefinger, to the amusement of Stella, I responded:

"Eh, father Bruce; seems that I noticed a paragraph in your *Bulletin* to some such effect—what is it?"

"We have, Malcolm, a periodical ascension, at different stations, for purposes of science and expediency. If you will go, I think you will be interested. As the station this time is in district thirteen, adjoining ours, several of our men take part. The tower is only an hour's easy ride. Usually a dozen or so go up; experts in using the aerolat. The height to which they attain and the evolutions are quite exciting—while there is really less danger to the participants than some of your Northern games, if we may believe reports."

"You can, friend Jasper; for in the intensity of their excitement our athletes go to extremes of ex-

ertion and contest that not unfrequently result in fatal injury."

"Oh, it is such fun, cousin, to see them race in the air," exclaimed Stella. "Last year I went with father and Willis to district sixteen, and two of the men had a flying match, and one made a miss stroke and tumbled heels overhead in the air. 'Twas the funniest thing—such a sprawling about before he could get going again." The girl laughed in such glee that we all joined her.

"I can well imagine, *ma petite*, how the man buzzard looked struggling to recover right side up and nothing to stand upon. Of course I shall go. But how about flying in the air myself? May I not put on the dress and climb to the tower platform, and prospect the country with one of your excellent glasses?"

"Certainly, Malcolm, you may do as much as that, while it would not be wise to imitate the evolutions of Julius, who will be one of the observers, I presume."

"Julius, the good fellow? I shall be very glad to see him, and you may rest easy, my dear Bruce. I shall take no risks. No more falls for me. That one in the mine pit suffices for the year."

"You can use my aerolat, dear Malcolm," offered Willis.

"No, good son, the boy has the freedom of mine, you know," rejoined his father. "Try your hand at the paddle to-day if you care."

"Thank you, ever kind father mine. I shall see you safely to the tower top, Malcolm."

"By the way, good folks, don't the ladies of your realm sport the aerostatic costume?"

"There, my father Bruce," broke in Stella, "I do wish you would let me try it some time."

"Yes, my daughter, you may. Very few of our women, Malcolm, seem inclined to practice the art of air navigation, although in most of our games, as you have doubtless seen, they take part—"

"With even more zest than their brothers, you might say, father," added Willis with a light laugh.

"Well, I can swim almost as good as you, brother mine—now, can I not?"

"Yes, little sister, I admit it. You would make a first-class mermaid."

"At about five we shall start, just after sunrise, my Milline," said Jasper.

"That means an early breakfast, my good boy. You must be down promptly, for these dear men will live and work by the sun to-morrow."

"Then I will sleep by the moon to-night, so as to be ahead of his sunship," was my rather opaque return, as we rose from the table.

Just as the daygod peeped over the eastern hills next morning three goalones left the Bruce home-stead and proceeded rapidly northward. Stella rode with me, guiding my vehicle with her expert hand. The improvement added by Morgan, an accelerating disk with sprocket teeth adjusted to the

gear, delighted the girl, because of the ease with which we could run by the goalone of Willis, in the little brushes of speed that were now and then tried to spice our trip. When we arrived at the tower station we found upward of one hundred and fifty people already assembled, and most of the aeronauts for the occasion had donned the floating dress. I noticed that some of these had more voluminous upper sleeves than others, and inferred that they intended to rise to higher points. They carried instruments slung to belt or shoulder-strap, and a double-bladed paddle of very light wood about five feet long and ten inches wide at the tapering ends. Their costume had been inflated to the degree that enabled them to skim along the ground easily. Each man thus prepared, tried his wings, so to speak, by deploying the paddle as a skilful boatman would to maneuver a boat according to his wishes. It was a thrilling sight. These men propelled themselves with such ease and certainty up and down, side-wise and backward, now darting forward bird-like, and then pausing in mid-air suddenly to shoot downward thirty or forty feet. Julius, my conductor on the confines of Oudemon, was among them and most admired for his expertness. Meanwhile Willis and I assumed our aerolats for the minor purposes we entertained, and after the observing party had ascended to their high stations we amateurs scaled the wall of the tower and settled upon its airy platform. There I could

watch the operations of the observers with easy convenience. They made their observations at different heights as intimated, the lowest according to his barometric record being up seven hundred and fifty-eight feet, the highest two thousand two hundred and sixty-three feet. Note was taken of temperature, humidity, gaseous condition of the air, electric conduction, current movements, and certain states of what they termed the "vitality of the atmosphere." As instrument after instrument was used it was lowered to the ground by a thread. These being self-registering, assistants below carefully noted the readings in books kept for the purpose. The series of investigations occupied an hour and a quarter.

The tower Willis and I had ascended was one of the tallest known, being two hundred and fifty feet in elevation, affording an excellent point of view for a wide area. In the early morning the scene offered to my gaze was surpassingly beautiful. I could not refrain from exclaiming as my eyes swept over the landscape: "Oh, Willis, how much you have to be grateful for in this glorious country all your own!"

The young man, deeply affected, responded warmly:

"Yes, my brother, it is indeed glorious. You can no longer wonder that we love our home, and care not to leave it."

"No, surely; were my best friends, mother, sisters

—all here, I could stay in it too, most contentedly, for the remainder of my days."

This ecstasy of emotion over I addressed myself to the maneuvers of the air students, and at intervals examining the country so much in view on all sides through the excellent field glass loaned me for the occasion. Object after object in that clear morning appeared in charming detail to my delighted eyes, and familiar as I had become with the general character of the scenery the play of color in the early sunlight imparted a variety of charm that seemed quite new. That was a wonderful little glass which aided my vision in this semi-scientific pastime, made by a local optician from crystal so clear that no imported lens I had seen at home could match it for transparency and definition.

AN ARCTIC VISITANT.

"They are coming down, Malcolm," said Willis, who had been experimenting in evolutions most of the time; "let us join them below."

I had just caught sight of a strange object in the far northeast and was straining my eyes to make it out. Apparently just above the trees, like a flattened bag or pillow in shape, at once brightly reflecting the sunbeams, then dull and dark, it seemed to sway and float in and out of sight. The thing, whatever it was, piqued my curiosity, and after a long, earnest look, and trying to fix the direction in mind, I replied to Willis: "I am ready; let us drop."

Opening the valve of my aerolat he permitted a part of the gas to escape and then did the same to his own equipment. In two minutes we had sunk down to the ground.

One of the air navigators, yet in his floating costume, who stood near the spot where I had settled, remarked banteringly: "Did you find anything worth looking at, stranger friend, from that little height?"

"Your query, my good fellow, is quite opportune," I answered. "Yes, I saw many things worth dwelling on; could remain up there all day."

"If you should try it, oh venturesome youth," he rejoined in the same light vein, "I fear that we should find only a trace of you in a few oil-soaked rags at night, for the temperature at fourteen to-day on that stone coping will probably reach 146 Fahrenheit."

"Then, my dear son of the ether, as I do not care to be sublimed to a spot of hydro-carbon so early in my career, I shall not go up again just now. But I saw something a little before I tumbled down that looked very queer; could not at all make it out. Have you time—a minute or so, to see if I have blundered—glimpsed a commonplace thing and magnified it in imagination to an object of importance?"

"Where? I do not mind trying to clear up your little mystery," he replied, laughing.

Handing him my glass, I said: "Use this and you

may find my puzzle. Yours might not catch it. Look in that direction when you get up to the height of the tower"—indicating the point of the horizon by my hand.

While we were talking a little group had gathered around us, and looked on good-naturedly while my sky-scaling friend examined his equipment, took up his paddle, and began a second ascent. Arriving at the summit of the tower he steadied himself with one hand and had scarcely begun to scan the northward horizon when an exclamation escaped his lips, faintly heard by us who were watching below. A further examination with the glass followed—then letting go his hold of the tower wall, a few sweeps of the paddle brought him to the ground by us.

"You are right enough, Malcolm. The thing is evidently much nearer and lower; is of great size—like a balloon partly collapsed. Some more gas, friends. Let me try to secure it."

A few gallons of gas added greatly to his buoyancy, and in another minute he was up and away, the long, even strokes of the paddle sending him swiftly onward.

"Carefully, good Royton," was shouted after him by Willis, who turned to me and said: "There must be high enjoyment in such perfect management, Malcolm—almost a bird!"

"Yes, cousin, I have often admired our trained acrobats at home, leaping from flying trapezes over

wide spaces with great certainty of eye and hand; but Royton's mid-air act now in performance is far ahead. With what ease he cleaves his way, every stroke placing him twenty feet farther on."

The movement of the air-swimmer, or rather boatman, was indeed a pretty sight, so graceful and smooth in every respect. There was the buoyancy of the cork upon water, but no sudden or uncertain jerks and wobblings, for intelligence and skill and self-confidence controlled every maneuver. Higher and farther he swept until the tall trees interposed, and we could no longer see him. Fifteen minutes had passed since the disappearance of the aeronaut, and I had begun to entertain some doubt as to the wisdom of my part in this venture of the young fellow, when a shrill whistle was faintly heard by the group waiting in the shade of the tower. This signal was followed by a prolonged horn-like call. Several of the men answered in a similar manner, and taking goalones we all set out in the direction from which the signals had come.

"Evidently he has found something, and it is too much for him to manage alone," cried one of the company.

"I hope that the brave fellow has met no mishap," I ventured.

"No fear of that, Malcolm; his signals mean success, whatever he has discovered."

As we went on the exchange of calls was kept up, until we came to an opening in a bit of forest fully

three miles from the tower, where Royton was espied standing by a formless mass of something that lay stretched upon the grass and low bushes. He had removed his aerolat, and was awaiting our approach.

“Malcolm is right,” he said; “it is a great balloon; we have never seen anything like it.”

Failing to work we spread to its full extent the mass of varnished cloth, and estimated that it covered the immense area of fully 25,000 square feet. Torn in several places and evidencing a severe and prolonged exposure to the elements, its construction being by compartments had served nevertheless to maintain its buoyancy in the air. No part of the car or basket remained, only a few shreds of cordage clinging to the much twisted and broken network that still enveloped most of the great bag. Later, in a fold of the cloth a fine aneroid barometer of Paris make was discovered and, tied up with it, strips of water-proof paper, on which were notes in a language unknown to the Oudemontians. The barometrical reading indicated that the airship had attained an extreme altitude of 11.7 kilos. The records on the paper were in pencil written in a cramped hand. A brief glance at these when on the ground where the balloon lay suggested that the language was Swedish, of which I had a light smattering, having in my youth obtained some knowledge of it from a Scandinavian servant who lived in our house several years. By common con-

sent the barometer and notes were handed to me as by right of first discovery, but I said: "No, my kind friends, the barometer should belong to you or to the Institute of Science. Permit me to take the notes, and try to make something out of them, if ever so little."

A later inspection of the find disclosed marks upon the fabric that proved it to have been made in Christiania, while the cloth bore the trademark of a Holland company.

With some expressions of compassion for the unlucky adventurer who had proudly sailed into the ocean of air on his scientific mission my companions rolled up the vast tissue and stowed it conveniently for future transportation to the Institute. Royton observed: "How many bright and noble fellows have rushed to death almost madly in their seeming devotion to science. Yet I can understand their motives."

"Yes, Royton, you of all of us," rejoined Willis, "can appreciate their spirit, for you have so much zeal for the discovery of things new and strange. If it were not for the deep, strong bonds of family love and race sympathy, that you acknowledge and respect as much as any of us, you would, it is likely, have broken away long ago and flown beyond our borders."

"You are right, my dear Bruce; when I was younger there came now and then enticing visions of life and scenes beyond our boundaries that were

almost overpowering, but as I grew older reason and judgment showed me the illimitable right here, and I believe, should I live a thousand years, I would not accomplish half the delightful work that lies close at hand."

"We may suppose, though, good Royton," I intruded, "that if you were to undertake to reach the North pole, or its antipode as mysterious, you would do it. Really, no irony is meant, friends; you have mechanical facilities that are not known to the advanced learning of the great outer world."

"Ah, Royton," said Julius, who had accompanied us to the scene of our finding, "others here would not hesitate to scale the highest mountain peak known to geography, if there were any good to come out of it for our fellow men."

"I know, Julius, that you would be a ready volunteer on such an excursion," said Royton, smiling, "if only to see what new evolutions you might attempt in the upper sky fields. As for the North pole or the South, let me venture in reply to our quick-eyed visitor that I might make the journey into those icy regions even to show how it could or ought to be done. The balloon idea is not a bad one, but balloons as made up North are perilous carriages. Our floatation apparatus is vastly better, and then there is a safety about it when you understand the method of propulsion. With a favorable wind we can cover five hundred miles easily in fifteen hours."

"Then you could certainly reach the pole, you air swimmers," was my comment, "for our Arctic explorers have approached within two hundred miles of it by their laborious and slow mode of travel. It would not be necessary for you to spend weeks and months in overland and ice journeys. Having reached a convenient station, by ship, say, you could make air flights and go and return at will. Before I leave your delightful country will you not instruct me in the composition of the gas you employ for so many purposes. There may be stores of the basic elements in chambers underground in the country where I live."

"Certainly we shall be glad, Malcolm, to furnish all the information we have," replied Royton with hearty emphasis. "If there is a volcanic belt in any section of your country,—indeed I know that there is in the great regions of your Missouri river—you will probably find by prospecting or borings a source of it. In our country we have no eruptions or severe ground shocks now, and think that it is because of the vent given to the natural gas magazines by our numerous excavations."

In the quiet of my room I puzzled over the notes of the unfortunate explorer. Here and there I made out a word, which translated into English conveyed the intimation of certain unhappy experiences in the Arctic circle. The cramped writing seemed that of frozen fingers or of nerves benumbed by ex-

haustion. Finally giving up the attempt to interpret the scrawls with anything like fullness, I handed them over to Pentersoe, as secretary to the Institute of Oudemont Science, with this disjointed translation:

Latitude 86.7—hazy—sun gone—weeks. 48 (probably temperature below freezing point. Centigrade). Earth touched—drop (ballast?) great land.—

Ericssen, no—supplies—life.

Wonderful electrical—currents south—broken
Lat 87—ice—ship abandoned.

Hope—balloon return—

Grinnell land?

Discovery—never— — — — And Tr—

Thus it appeared that another poor fellow had heroically struggled to add to the sum of knowledge concerning the far north, nearly reached the object of his ambition, and failed, leaving his costly air carriage to drift and drift in the wide spaces of ether until, a mere wreck of its early magnificence, it fell thousands of miles away from the point of departure, and among a people its unfortunate pilot had never dreamed of.

CHAPTER XXIV.

BANANA GARDENS AND A MISSION.

“I THINK of rolling over to district thirty-four to-morrow, Ellice, to see the famous banana gardens they have.”

“Then, cousin Malcolm,”—since our interview on the birds’ island I had become a new relation to the girl—“you will, of course, visit the Lomas home, for their bananas are among the best——”

“And see Dexter,” I rejoined, looking straight at her. The color warmed in her face.

“Yes, you will like him, I know. He is so gentle, and then he is well acquainted with our trees, and has studied the geology of the country with great care.”

“What shall I carry to him from you, my dear cousin? I want a special message for the good fellow.”

“Oh, Malcolm, some one has been telling you—Percy, now,” exclaimed the ingenuous girl.

“No, Percy has had nothing to say; but never mind. I won’t ask you to explain. I shall only consider myself the bearer of your kindest regards, eh?”

To this Ellice made no return, only the pink deepened on her cheek and her eyes sank. Whether

it was my audacious manner that affected her or a reviving tenderness toward the young naturalist I did not venture to determine, although the main purpose of the visit in district thirty-four was to see Dexter and have a talk with him *in re* Ellice.

An invitation had been given me some weeks before by Gilbert Lomas, the father of Dexter, to look over his plantation and spend a little time with his family, which was reported to have characteristics of special interest in its makeup. Abundant reason, therefore, existed for the excursion to district thirty-four; but as one's reasons were rarely asked in Oudemon for any purposed action, my announcement to Ellice was received without any direct question. I hinted somewhat delicately that her company would be agreeable on the fifty-five mile run. She, however, made no reply, other than the wish that the ride and visit would be enjoyed every way, and that I should report on my return what I had seen.

On some other page it may have been noted that the people of a district had grown into the habit of cultivating some fruit or vegetable as a specialty, either after finding that the soil was peculiarly adapted to its production naturally, or because of a selective method of tillage. Hence it was that the tables of Oudemon households were furnished with garden and field products the perfection of which in color, form and quality was new to my experience. Familiar enough with the best examples of West

Indian bananas, the specimens that tempted my palate here appeared to be of a rare type. In Lomas' garden both banana and plantain trees were to be seen rising upward of forty feet in height, their great leaves arching gracefully in a radius of eight or more feet.

On the same tree were flowers and fruit in all stages of development—great spikes of purple blossom and tuber clusters in rich yellow or brown, the latter of such size that I hesitated to stand near the tree lest a sudden fall might overwhelm me with a mass of fragrant pulp. One variety of the plantain was cultivated by Lomas on account of the fine fibre obtained from its leaf. After dressing this fibre had much of the delicacy of French silk, but was longer and woven into fabrics highly esteemed by the women for outside wear. The undyed tissue was light and very tough and of a soft yellow sheen that had the property of reflecting the warmer rays of the sun, thus fitting it for summer dress. The quantity of fibre obtained from one leaf was so considerable that at least three skirts of the size worn by our Northern ladies could be made from the finished cloth. Held up to the light this fabric appeared quite translucent, yet water would not escape through its mesh, and it was as complete covering as a garment. Mother Bruce presented me with a shirt fashioned from this cloth by her expert fingers, and I was decidedly proud of it and enjoyed the comfort it afforded on my outings in the summer sun.

It was a large and lively company that surrounded me in the Lomas house. I remember a certain family residing in the suburbs of New York city that required a table ample enough to seat twenty persons. The head of that house was a notable banker, who did not wish any of his children to leave him, and after the marriage of a son or daughter insisted upon their living in the old mansion, or an annex of it, and eating at his table. A happier man than he when seated over the roast and distributing liberal cuts to the many members of his household and the guests who might be present could scarcely be found. So with Lomas. Three married sons and two married daughters, with their children, a son unmarried, Dexter, and other relations, besides the assistants, male and female, of house and farm, twenty-four in all made up the goodly company met in the large saloon that served for the general uses of the family. Lomas himself was a sort of Creole. His mother, English by descent, had married a reputed Spaniard in the early days of the colony. But a few years of wifehood, then the husband died, leaving her with one child only, who grew to vigorous and splendid manhood, and now, at nearly eighty years of age, was one of the handsomest men I had ever seen. His complexion retained the rich olive tint that was probably an inheritance from his father, while a mass of deep auburn hair

in which a few silver threads glistened here and there curled closely over a broad expanse of brow.

Most of the children had received a liberal portion of the father's good looks, the men having the dark or black hair of mother Lomas, and the women a rich, velvety complexion and hair of a deep gold or dark maroon tint, which could be easily regarded as a legacy from their English grandmother. The nine children of these sons and daughters would have received marked notice in any city of my native land, so charming were they in form and face, so sprightly and graceful in movement. The eldest was but ten years old, the youngest a crowing infant. Father Lomas had not married until well in his thirties, thus accounting for the tender years of his grandchildren.

Here I witnessed again the happy result of judicious nurture and training, for with all their exuberance of spirit and response to impression, these children were obedient and deferential toward their elders, yet but repeating the beautiful courtesy of the sons and daughters of Lomas to their widowed father. The older ones took a subordinate part in the general talk, and both stimulated it and amused by their intelligent questions and naive exclamations.

The opportunity for the interview with Dexter was brought about in this way. In the course of talk at table I remarked in a casual vein, "I have been told that there is a notable group of bow trees

a few miles north of here on the border of a lake which I have not had the privilege of seeing yet. Perhaps you, Dexter, may be at leisure to accompany me thus far and show me the wonders. I will promise not to detain you long."

"It will give me pleasure, indeed, Malcolm, to go with you," replied the young man.

"Dexter, my son, is well versed in trees," added the father with an accent of pride in his voice, "and can point out other features of the neighborhood that our young friend from abroad will enjoy knowing, I think."

TACTICS FOR LOVE'S SAKE.

An hour later I made my adieu to this most entertaining family and turned the wheels of my little chariot, by Dexter's direction, northward. The young man proved an intelligent arborist. He loved trees and entered warmly into the discussion of such as I named. The great bows were reached and found to be magnificent specimens, indeed, of their noble class, and after lingering half an hour on the margin of the lake we set out to return. Then I broached the subject that lay upon my mind.

"Dexter, my friend, you seem to be nearly my own age, and this short association has drawn me near enough to you to enable me to know something of your worth— No, do not protest; I have a word to say that is of importance, and shall not

occupy time with a useless preface. You Oudemontites do not waste words by unnecessary preliminaries. It is about Ellice."

The young man started, changed color, but did not speak. I checked the pace of my wagon and continued: "I lately gathered from a remark by one of your friends the impression that you entertain for that most charming girl a sentiment that is warmer than the common feeling of a brother. If so, it is creditable enough."

"You certainly recognize her great worth, Malcolm," the young man interposed, with deep emphasis.

"Indeed, my dear fellow, according to my capacity of appreciation I do recognize her admirable traits of character and intellect, and if you sincerely harbor the wish to have her for your wife——"

"Oh, dear Malcolm, could I win her my highest object in life would be gained," broke from his lips.

"Well, I consider you worthy of her, Dexter, and would have you take courage in the thought that you may win her. It has been my happy fortune, you might know, to be much in the society of Ellice while here, and she has shown me a world of kindness and courtesy. I shall carry to my distant home many delightful recollections in which she is the chief figure as companion and instructor. If I were of your people, Dexter, it is most likely

that I should be in the list as a suitor. You folks, however, do not encourage rivalry or competition in love any more than you do in your other relations."

"Ah, Malcolm, that would not be following the teaching of the Royal Law—and then the sentiment of the woman."

"Yes, my good boy, I have great respect for your views on this delicate subject. But tell me confidentially, if you will—has the lady in question really declined your attentions?"

"No, bless her; she treats me very kindly, but as yet I cannot see in her conduct much encouragement, and lately, your being here, perhaps I have foolishly misconstrued—and some have thought—excuse me, Malcolm, I am not clear, I know."

"Perhaps I can grasp the situation better, Dexter, because of my Northern education in social affairs. Ellice, however, is too much of an Oudemonite to have an excessive regard for a stranger even though he be the guest of her people, and therefore entitled to her respect and confidence; and I believe your chances are excellent for securing her favor."

"Thank you, good Malcolm; your words are most welcome to me." The young man in his excitement clasped my hand.

"But don't understand me as deliberately aiming to inspire a false hope. I can well believe that you have kept your feeling for her too much in reserve,

your natural delicacy and want of self-assurance preventing that show of regard which would invite return in a woman who craves attention, yet is also indisposed by natural delicacy to manifest a warm feeling unless she is quite confident of its appreciation. Your women are not unlike ours, notwithstanding your many differences in the matter of social liberty; they are women after all, and like to be sought and wooed and won.

“Another matter, Dexter, before I drop you”—we were nearing the Lomas home—“I hope in a few days to explore an ancient mine up in the west ridge that I stumbled into not very long ago. I need not go into particulars with one so intimate with the Dentons, I see. Now will you be of the party? I believe that your geological knowledge will be of service to us.” The deeply earnest expression that had occupied his face yielded to a smile as I referred to my adventure, and there appeared in the voice a vein of playfulness as he answered:

“I should be happy to go with you, Malcolm. You must have marked the stations well.”

“Then it’s agreed, my dear fellow. I shall notify you of the date. Here we are. I shall not carry you any farther. A happy meeting soon.”

With a warm handclasp and an earnest return of the parting words Dexter sprang from the goalone, not waiting for it to stop; his whole manner was expressive of a degree of exhilaration that prompted not a little self-complaisance as I rode southward in the soft afternoon haze.

CHAPTER XXV.

IN THE ANCIENT MINE AGAIN.

IN accordance with my wishes a party was soon formed to visit the mine that had been the scene of my accidental adventures. No premature graying of hair was a sequence of the trials of that never-to-be-forgotten pit, yet some disquiet of stomach annoyed me for several days as a resultant of the unusual nerve tension. Besides those friends who had participated in the rescue, Pentersoe and Dexter Lomas joined the expedition, which proved to be the last important event undertaken by me before leaving Oudemont to return North. The company, together with the apparatus considered necessary for such investigations as might be made, occupied five goalones. Ellice rode with me, while my faithful Jabber, to whose entreaties I had yielded, took a perch upon the box behind us.

As we rolled on I remarked to the girl: "I have invited Dexter partly because of his interest in archaeology. Some talk that I had with him the other day, when I went banana hunting, you know, convinced me that he is not meanly informed regarding the ancient history of your country."

"Indeed, he knows a great deal about it, Cousin

Malcolm," replied Ellice. "I do not know any one who has studied the subject more carefully. It is a pleasure to hear Dexter talk on it."

"And yet, Ellice, I believe that he may be very reticent on another subject, although he has probably given the most earnest thought to it."

The girl looked at me as if uncertain of my meaning, and I meeting her gaze with a quizzical smile, she flushed slightly.

"He is a noble fellow," I went on, "and one cannot help liking him in the start; but there is one fault or weakness in him quite marked."

"Why, Malcolm," what have you found in him to condemn?" she said with an eagerness in the voice that pleased me, while she raised a hand to emphasize the question. Pausing a few moments, I gazed into her face as if wondering at her insistence.

"Ah, my dear cousin, there are men who are too diffident and self-conscious to trust themselves in matters that may concern their best hopes."

"How trust themselves, Malcolm—do I understand you?" Her face had deepened in color.

"Yes, I suspect that you do understand me. Ellice; for I think if Dexter were brave enough to speak his mind you and he would be on better terms in a certain way. Well, it's a personal affair and I should not obtrude myself in it. Yet I cannot help feeling a deep interest in my new cousin's welfare."

She was silent for a time and then rejoined slowly:

“A while ago, Malcolm, before you came, I did feel strongly toward Dexter, and was convinced that he had much regard for me, but he would not speak, only look at me with those dark gray eyes so pathetically, that I almost lost patience with him. Perhaps a little later he might have taken courage, but meanwhile you came——”

“And the novelty from the North claimed your attention to the neglect of the staple goods of your own country—eh, cousin? Well, the novelty must suffer by comparison,” I laughed, and Ellice smiled at the levity of my humor, but responded somewhat gravely:

“No, no, Malcolm, stranger friend never-to-be-forgotten; but we must bow to circumstances, especially when you men so obstinately determine them.”

“If for the better, why not bow in happy submission, thou bright hope of the Denton house? Ah, you women of Oudemon, on you rests the happiness of the masculine world hereabouts, and you know it. I may not be as wise as your brothers of this free nation, Ellice, yet I think that your future is related to that of Dexter Lomas.”

She made no answer, but sat with her eyes looking away over the landscape as we passed along. I did not press the subject further, but turned the

current of talk on other matters in which the girl joined almost mechanically.

At the great maguey Dexter and Pentersoe were in waiting, the former saluting Ellice with a smiling confidence of manner that gratified me, especially as I noted on Ellice's frank countenance an expression of pleased surprise. On arriving at the point of ascent to the elevated terrace I found that a rope had been stretched from the lower to the upper level, so that the party made its way easily upward; and at the shaft, which was soon reached, a boom with rigging had been set that facilitated the descent to the bottom and robbed it of all danger. Seeing these preparations for our quest I turned to Restling inquiringly.

"You may thank Bross Champlin for all this, my boy. He has been as anxious as yourself to explore the secrets of yon passage, yet has not entered it, yielding precedence to its modern discoverer."

Lamps were lighted as soon as we touched the pit's bottom, and then in Indian file we entered the narrow gateway, Ellice preceding me and Dexter following her. We had larger lamps now, very powerful in illuminating capacity, clearing up the passage for fifty feet or more in advance and bringing into distinct view small objects on the floor or walls. The engineer led the way, bearing a lamp. I was next, carrying a strong, steel-pointed staff. The brilliancy of the lights was reflected by a thou-

sand radiant points on wall and floor. Crystals of every hue gleamed and sparkled, many almost dazzling by their intensity, and calling out exclamations of surprise and pleasure now and then from some of the party. Accustomed though they were to the wonders of their country, the richness of this new field of mineral deposits and gems appeared remarkable. For myself I yielded quite freely to my emotions of delight, and often burst out with strong expressions of admiration and amazement, evidently to the great amusement of my companions.

“Dexter, how like Vega,” cried Ellice, pointing to a brilliant spot in the wall forward which glowed with blue and red. The young man darted by me and Champlin and in a trice had detached a large crystal from its native bed, and then returning, handed it to Ellice. “It is a sapphire, I think,” he said, “and of unusual size, as you may see.”

“Beautiful, indeed, Dexter; how it would polish! Cousin Malcolm, will you have it? Perhaps take it home for Olive?” she added in a lower tone.

“If Dexter does not protest, I will, gladly.” At the same time I took the stone from her hand.

“No, certainly not. If you care I will examine and compare it with other sapphires in my collection and tell you about it soon. The corundum layers are heavy here and I have no doubt we can find some fine ruby and lazuli masses. Perhaps

Olive's complexion would be better suited to the ruby."

"Well, I must say that somebody has been giving me away—that little witch of a Stella. Thank you, my excellent Dexter, she is much on the order of our Ellice—a trifle darker, maybe. But I will keep the sapphire and you may send her a ruby."

"There, Dexter," cried Ellice, laughing, "see how accommodating our Northern cousin is—we must provide him with a good, large ruby, or perhaps a beryl; you know I admire the beryl because of its Bible significance—and I remember, eh, you once expressed a liking for beryls because of their deep, seagreen tints."

"Just as you like, young folks," said I; "let it be a beryl—the variety or oddity of the stone will be a point in its favor, for Olive likes rare things."

"I shall be on the alert for a good specimen, Ellice, you may be sure," the young man said, a marked accent of pleasure warming his voice.

Our party made a rapid march along the irregular passages, taking the direction I had pursued. I looked in vain for signs of reptile inhabitants, and wondered that none appeared, until Archbold remarked, as if he had received an impression of my thought: "We set two mongosta to work here a few days after your visit, Malcolm, and they have apparently made these recesses more agreeable for those who might care to stay in them over night."

"But I believe, brother, that one of our mongosta failed to return, and we are at a loss to know why," said the engineer.

"Perhaps the good beast found escape through an opening somewhere in the ridge," I ventured.

"Not likely, Malcolm; we shall probably find another shaft like the one back. The ancient Aztec miners made their excavations in the mountains between two deep pits, as a rule, and I think this series of tunnels will finally terminate in a shaft as large or larger than the one by which we have entered."

A RELIC OF THE MIOCENE.

We had by this time extended our subterranean journey beyond the point where my lamp had failed and entered a second chamber-like expansion having a voluted roof twenty feet or more in height. Here was a convenient place for stopping and conference regarding further proceedings. The floor was covered with débris from the old cuttings, several small heaps of it forming tolerable seats. The air here had a freshness quite remarkable, yet no mark of an opening in roof or sides to the outer world was discernible in the light of our lamps. We concluded to address ourselves to the lunch baskets that were a good part of our luggage, and discussed ways and means for continuing our investigations while munching the palatable food found in plentiful supply in the fragrant napkins.

Attracted by a peculiar scintillation in an angle of the wall near which we, *i.e.*, Ellice, Dexter and I, were sitting, Dexter examined the spot and found it to be caused by a formation of quartzose, of which he struck off a large fragment. On closer inspection he pronounced it gold bearing, and was confirmed in opinion by the engineer, who said that he had little doubt that this large space had been excavated on account of its richness in deposits of gold and gems, and that it was most likely that the supply of useful metal was far from exhausted. Picking up some of the bits of stone from the floor, he pointed to grayish brown specks in the crystalline structure which indicated the presence of gold. "I am of opinion," remarked Champlin, "that the old miners found the rock so well stored with seamy gold that they considered the small stuff lying here of little account. I think that if we pass higher up through yonder gallery we shall find the walls largely composed of auriferous rock."

This remark suggested the continuance of our exploration. There were two passages leading from this chamber, both elevated above the floor, one at the height of about four feet, the other fully seven, the orginal workers having provided rough steps in the brittle stone for access to them. The lower passage was the wider, and from it a very decided current of air flowed into the chamber,

accounting for the freshness that was perceived when we first entered it. We decided to seek for the source of this current, and so made our way into the lower channel, Willis taking the lead, lamp in hand. A hundred feet within this passage brought us to an abrupt turn, the walls presenting a very rough surface, with fissures and crypts and rude projections that compelled more care in our march than we had hitherto observed, for the blaze of crystal and metallic deposit was now so intense as to be fairly dazzling, at least to my eyes, and collision of arm or leg with a sharp angle was far from agreeable.

Willis preceded us around the turn by perhaps fifteen feet, going forward with the buoyancy of sanguine youth, while the remainder of the party hesitated a little, in view of the suddenness of the change in direction. Then an exclamation of surprise was heard, followed by the speedy return of the young fellow.

"My dear friends," said he, in a tone of excitement, "the passage a little around the bend here falls off, I should think, twenty feet, all at once, and is much wider. I had almost stepped off, and there below I saw, I am quite sure, a large animal—a very strange-looking animal, with a snake-like head and neck and a large, smooth, shining body. Dexter can tell us what it is, no doubt."

"Perhaps I can," replied young Lomas, modestly, and started forward, the engineer and Willis

with him. In a few minutes they returned, and to our eager looks Champlin answered:

“Our young Bruce might have stumbled into a worse trap than Malcolm, for right at the foot of the break in the level, twenty feet down, certainly lies an enormous beast. Dexter thinks it is a constrictor or saurian of a rare variety—a survival of a very old species. When Willis reflected a beam from his lamp upon it the beast partly uncoiled and reared its beak-like jaw in the air—it seemed the girth of an oil-cask or even larger. Such an animal could easily ascend to our level.”

He spoke with a coolness, even a lightness, that sounded out of harmony with the place we were in—a narrow space, rock-bound, in the bowels of the mountain, and far from the point of ingress. I looked from face to face of my companions. They were calm and assured; even Ellice smiled as she returned my glance. But it was very different with my four-pawed attendant. All along he had shown the greatest exhilaration—gamboling about, peering here and there at niche and corner, and amusing us by his antics, meanwhile carrying the lunch basket. Now he crouched at my feet, whining and trembling, as if in great alarm.

“Well,” said the elder Bruce, “the disappearance of the mongosta seems to clear up.”

“You think, then, Jasper, that this beast has despatched him?” I asked.

“Very little doubt of it, Malcolm.”

"I suppose our exploration is at an end." My feeling of disappointment must have been apparent in the tone, for Restling answered decidedly:

"By no means, my boy. We are provided against interferences, and I am quite sure that Bross and Dexter are burning to get into that lower cutting and will not tolerate defeat from such a source."

"Archbold reflects my wish," added the engineer, "for certainly I am in no humor for turning about just here. From the quality of the air we must be quite near an outlet or opening of some sort." Opening the satchel carried over a shoulder as he spoke he took out a small cylinder that appeared in the lamplight much like the cartridges used in the mines, and a spool of dull, metallic thread.

"I should like to preserve as much of the animal as possible for our museum," remarked Dexter. "Are you going to blow him up?" I asked.

"I don't know any other way to placate the beast, good Malcolm, and he is right in our path, and it is likely that he will not feel much of the shock. This is one of our mining combinations and quite effective, as you may know, in open firing."

We quietly looked on for the brief space occupied by the engineer in preparing the explosive. Having attached the loose end of the thread to a small ring in the side of the cartridge, Dexter took the latter, with a few coils of thread in hand, and quietly walked around the projecting wall into the

unexplored passage, the engineer unwinding the spool as was required. Meanwhile the remainder of the party withdrew twenty feet or more backward. In another minute Dexter had returned to us. "None too soon," he said hastily; "the reptile is partly up the wall."

Champlin carefully drew upon the thread until the slack was taken up; then a forcible jerk was followed almost instantly by a dull roar and the crackle and crash of bursting rock, with a rush of dust and wind that dulled the brilliancy of our lamps and suspended breathing for a little.

"I'm thinking that Antonio must have mixed the tubes. This one was fully two degrees more powerful than we needed and has overdone the matter," commented Champlin. "I fear, my excellent geologist, you must now be content with broken bones."

"Perhaps Ellice will help me to articulate them. If so, Bross, I shall be quite content," replied the young naturalist in a playful vein, yet with an accent of confidence that must have been new to the girl, for she glanced at him with a surprised gesture and then added:

"If you think, Dexter, I can be of help that way, I shall, gladly. But see how the sunlight comes in there. You men have broken down the roof."

We hastened to the scene of destruction, Champlin leading, Dexter walking close by Ellice and speaking in a low voice to her. The shot had been most effective; it had torn away the friable wall

on both sides for ten feet and made an opening overhead of three feet in diameter where the rock was evidently quite thin, so much, indeed, of the stone and crumble being thrown down as to fill the deep passage half way up toward our level.

AN ANCIENT TREASURY.

What proved most interesting to me was the exposure of a chamber on the left of this passage, the light from the break above being sufficient for its thorough examination. It was a large cistern or well-like space, the wall on the undisturbed sides arching to an elliptical ceiling not more than six feet long, while at the floor the diameter was fully twenty feet. On the sides were three shelf-like projections on which were set in close rows blocks of a dark bronze-colored substance. We entered this chamber and looked about us. Dexter, however, had jumped down upon the rocky ruin in the lower gallery to ascertain the fate of the strange beast. Climbing a little, aided by the roughness of the wall I was able to reach one of the shelves and threw down two of the blocks. They were heavy enough—fifty pounds apiece at least. Champlin picked up one, struck it with his hammer pick, and remarked: "This is a crude quality of gold."

"What, do you mean that all the stuff piled upon these shelves is gold?" I cried in amazement.

"Most likely, Malcolm, if this is a sample," he

returned, laughing at my earnestness. "The indications are that the ancient miners had a furnace near by and smelted the rough masses of ore which, for the greater part, they may have taken out of this chamber and the one farther back. Then somewhat later this was used for storing the product, I think."

"If all this is gold, Archbold, why, think of its enormous value," I persisted.

"It is yours, all of it, my dear boy, by right of discovery," said my friend, smiling, that favorite twinkle sparkling richly also in his eye. "When will you take it home?"

The manner of the dear councillor and his question awakened me from the state of forgetfulness of my immediate social environment into which this sudden exhibition of untold wealth had precipitated me. How potent is the spell of gold upon the soul bred amid the scenes where money and riches constitute the chief feature of interest and admiration! Conscious now as to where I was and with a face that must have reddened deeply, for the hot blood flashed through its vessels, I confessed:

"Oh, I had for the moment forgotten where I am—here among you, dear people. If mine by right of discovery, although I might question that on grounds recognized in the law of my own country, I tender it freely to you, as I know you can make the better use of it."

The engineer picked up the heavy ingot again, struck it sharply several times with his hammer until it broke into two pieces, revealing a glistening, crystalloid surface of a deep cherry color.

"You see how the metal has set, in the course of centuries assuming this beautiful coral-like character—an unusual occurrence, I am sure."

"Very remarkable, Bross," add Pentersoe.

Taking up the smaller piece, I said: "This is certainly most beautiful and curious. I should like to keep it as a specimen of the work of the primitive gold hunters, but it would be a rather burdensome sample." I let it fall to the floor, and Jabber, as if divining my meaning, seized the metal and with seeming ease hopped gleefully about as if delighted to be its bearer.

"Well, Jabber has assumed the duty of transporting the prize," said the elder Bruce, laughing, and you have only to slip it into your basket and he will carry it."

A moment later Dexter joined us in the treasure vault, with the report that he could only find a joint or two of the tail of the beast, the remainder being covered by the fallen rock. "We have happened upon a very interesting field, it seems to me, dear friends. To be sure the blast has served the animal badly. Look at this bit of tail, how tough and bony and peculiar! I have never seen anything like it in any of the treatises; suggests a mixed variety, something of the old dinosaur and

something of the boa. We must come up soon again, Lewis, and get the fellow out. There are other features, too. The south wall of the tunnel has given way partly, near the bottom; it is a built-up wall. I saw projecting from it a large human bone—a femur, I'm sure—part of a skeleton of great size; a very giant he must have been in life. It seems to point to the existence of a vault or crypt containing remains of men, some of whom, perhaps, delved in these mines."

"Why, my good Dexter," said Archbold, "this is a discovery indeed. We have never before found any remains of the ancient inhabitants themselves, although the vestiges of their customs and industrial activities are abundant enough. I hope that you will obtain a complete skeleton, studious brothers, and learn much from their skulls of that life history which the old Eastern poem says is written upon one's head."

"I am greatly pleased that we have accomplished so much to-day, my dear friends," I interposed, "and am content now to think of returning."

"The suggestion is a proper one," said Jasper, "for the day must be wearing away."

"About sixteen hours, comrades," added the engineer. "Perhaps we can emerge into daylight through the rift up there and be able to make a quick run home."

Getting upon the shoulders of the stalwart Champlin, Dexter could just reach the break, and

by a nimble feat of gymnastics pulled himself through it and a moment afterward peered down upon us with the announcement that he was upon a shelving bank, and although the ground was rather steep and broken, we could make the descent with a little care. A few feet of rope soon landed the remainder of us outside the treasure vault, where the engineer after a brief survey of the country, said:

“We are, I think, about two miles from our starting point above. That clump of *jupati* I know,” pointing to a group of the beautiful trees, whose plume-like leaves trailing forty or more feet downward indicated unmistakably their character, although as much as a mile and a half distant. “A little beyond is a vein of iron we think of opening. We shall save time by getting down to the level from this point.”

We made the descent without difficulty, aside from a little incident in which Jabber figured conspicuously. Owing to the weight of the basket and his irrepressible disposition to frolic, the monkey took two headers on the loose shaly incline, but recovered his balance and good nature, accompanying the gyrations with the most ludicrous chattering and grimaces. Dexter gave much attention to Ellice, affording me a very agreeable study of gallant courtesy—the old Spanish cavalierism solvent in the blood of his father exploited itself in really charming fashion. He was no longer the

shy, hesitating swain, but appeared in an entirely new rôle of conduct, offering the girl of his heart all the offices of a refined and delicate escort in a calm, assured, yet most earnest manner. And Ellice—well, she received the attentions of the fine fellow with such a demeanor of satisfaction that I could not help feeling a pang of regret or envy despite the fact that all this pretty by-play was largely of my own making, and thus I had figured as a matchmaker, a character for whom I had always entertained a species of contempt. But in Oudemon affairs of the heart were different, and then to bring about a union of two such persons as these young people could not be otherwise than a creditable bit of strategy, and I should not lose by it, for gratitude in that republic of love was a real and lasting sentiment—not a mere expression of transitory feeling such as in other lands is voiced by the conventional—“Oh, I thank you very much.”

It was nearly seventeen hours when we reached the great maguey, where half our party struck off in their homeward directions, leaving us of District fourteen to proceed in ours. Dexter wrung my hand. A bright light gleaming in his eyes betrayed his inward joy as I remarked: “Well done, good boy; you have but to go on and win the pearl of our district.”

Ellice was in exuberant spirits, and chatted merrily, insisting, with girlish caprice, upon taking the guide bar of the goalone, while I must look

after the motor. An hour later the sun dropped over the ridge, and the multi-hued twilight of the region, with its thousand reflections from peak and glistening leafage, settled upon us, and soon the moon, nearly full, illuminated a cloudless sky. When finally our fleet carriages entered the court of my "hotel" and mother Bruce and Stella welcomed our return, the time measurer hanging in the family room had but a little space before sounded twenty hours; not, let it be said, by the slow process common to Northern clocks, but in a fashion analogous to that of the stenographic print and caligraphy of Oudemont—for instance, two strokes upon the silvery gong, a long pause being made between them.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A GRAVE COMMUNICATION.

"WHY, Malcolm, cousin, so sober? Are you not well?"

"Ah, *ma petite*, are you a witch? If so, certainly the most charming one I've met."

"Dear, you must not talk that way, cousin; you do not know how it affects my heart," the girl answered, with a grimace and affectation of sentiment most amusing. "There's that sweet girl up North —are you thinking of her? If so, why carry around such a woebegone face? You have not spoken more than a dozen words to us all this morning, Malcolm, really." The last half of the remark had a note of seriousness.

"Well, my dear little seeress, if I must, I will declare to you the heaviness of my soul. I am out of sorts this morning, if you can catch the meaning of a common phrase with us, this morning; not physically, but oppressed by a singular feeling, as if things were not altogether right at home. 'Tis a vague impression that I have been trying to guess, but really have no way to solve it."

"Perhaps I can help you, cousin."

"I shouldn't wonder if you could, you wonderful

sister of the Macbeth mystics. I had about concluded to go over to Archbold and ask his help."

"Try me, Malcolm; do try me. You know I am studying these things very earnestly and am learning——"

"Yes, Stella, the good councillor says that you can receive a message very well. And there's that affair of the old mine; it put to flight nearly all my doubts, you know."

"I do believe you have the gift yourself, cousin. Now is it not likely that you have an impression that might be made out?"

"I shall not be contumacious, little one; but what may I do to put you in the mood of interpretation?"

"Oh, let me sit by you and hold your hand for a little, and perhaps I will get the vibration, if friends are thinking much of you and would communicate with you."

"Here is a letter I received from Olive some weeks ago, and here is the portrait of mother"—drawing them from my pocket. The thought of how certain clairvoyants I had met conducted their *seances* recurred to mind—"Perhaps they may assist."

"Yes, they might," replied the girl, taking letter and photograph in one hand and pressing them against her upper forehead, while with the other hand she clasped mine. Closing her eyes she remained silent for five or six minutes, while I sat

beside her, expectantly curious. Suddenly she exclaimed :

“There, it comes! The light is opening!” Her voice was strangely different from its usual tone.

“Oh, how peculiar! how many houses! the crowded street! what noises! Ah, I am in a room; how pretty everything is! so neat, so graceful! There, a bed of high corners, of dark wood; such a sweet pink and white spread, and such a sweet-looking lady with wavy gray hair, lying still in it.”

“Can it be my dear mother, Stella? Is she alive?” was my anxious inquiry, for the bedstead and covering were such as mother used.

“Yes; still, Malcolm!” the girl ordered imperatively. “It comes slowly. Now she speaks. Can I hear? Do not move!”

Over the young face crept an expression so intense that it gave a maturity of age that amazed me.

“Now, yes, I hear—‘The doctor says I am much better, Olive dear. I am glad for Malcolm’—there are tears in her eyes—‘yet, poor boy, when he knows—’”

“Knows what—oh, Stella, dear, good girl, can you not hear what it may be?”

“Still—still, or I cannot catch it, so low—A young woman with such a kind face, such lovely eyes—listen, she speaks—‘we are so glad that you are better, dearest madam—’”

“Tis Olive,” I could not forbear exclaiming, for

that was the fashion in which she often addressed my mother.

“Still—‘and Malcolm will not think so much about his business affairs when he returns to find you have recovered from this illness. We will cheer him up, won’t we?’ What a sweet manner! What a lovely voice! Now again she is about to speak—the dear sick one—listen—‘I am sorry, though, for my dear son; he had every confidence in Langer—’”

“What, has Langer gone wrong?” I cried anxiously. “Oh, get more, to clear this mystery.”

Stella shook her head reprovingly while her small fingers tightened about mine.

“Listen—she says so slowly—‘But perhaps Langer was so much involved in his speculations that he thought to retrieve himself by using Malcolm’s trust.’ Now Olive takes her hand gently and speaks: ‘Never mind, dearest madam. I am sure when Malcolm comes home he will make it all right’—and you will, I know, cousin—‘Don’t worry about it. Now go to sleep and you will feel so much stronger.’ There, see how gently she smooths the sick woman’s hair and arranges the bed coverings. I like you, Olive, very much. We should all love you were you with us.”

The girl opened her eyes, and looked at me for a few seconds like one awakening from a deep sleep.

“What have I said, cousin Malcolm? I feel as if I had been somewhere—a long way.”

“My little seeress, if what you have just said is true, and some of it I know to be, you have been a great way in mind or spirit; and while I must thank you for doing me an important service I cannot but regret that it is of a nature to hurry me away from here and all the dear people I have grown to like so much.”

“Oh, dear cousin, I am so sorry that I have said anything to worry you, and make you feel that you must hurry away from us.” The tears flashed into her eyes, and with both hands she grasped mine pleadingly.

“Dear little cousin, it is for the best, I’m sure. Through your wonderful gift I may be saved, and others, from what would be a very serious misfortune; and then you have told me that my mother is improving after—very grave illness. I shouldn’t wonder if my affairs had been the cause of her breakdown, thinking, no doubt, that I must be so far from home that the worst could happen without any interference on my part.”

“Oh, Malcolm,” cried Stella with sudden thought, “let us run and find our friend Archbold——”

“But Stella, your school, and it is now time——”

“It will not matter for to-day, cousin dear. Oh. I should like to know if Archbold has anything like what I have seen, and you can tell me all I said while asleep, for I was asleep. You must have power that way, Malcolm.”

"You mean what we call magnetic or hypnotic power. I never knew it before."

"I suppose so. We call it—Archbold has said it is a spiritual communicating influence or sympathy."

"Certainly well named—put on your sun hat and I shall soon have the goalone ready."

We had not been fifteen minutes on the way when Stella exclaimed: "There comes Archbold now." Sure enough the councillor was just turning a corner in our direction and coursing rapidly. The next minute our vehicles were stopped side by side. I noted an unusual expression on his face, which yielded only in part as he saluted us.

"We were just on our way to see you, dear councillor," said Stella. "I did not go to school, you see."

"As I supposed, little friend. Have you, Malcolm, any intimation of trouble at home?"

"Yes, my excellent; within the hour I have received intimations through our Stella here, both pleasant and unpleasant," and I went on to relate the particulars of the *seance*, Archbold lending the closest attention, and when I paused he remarked:

"My good girl, you have made great progress."

"Under Malcolm's influence, Archbold. I think he must have special power."

"There is little doubt of it—a neglected gift and only needs the proper development to be of high value. Well, Malcolm, my son, I obtained a strong

impression last night which is now confirmed by your account of Stella's communication. I had been asleep—when I awoke—possibly there had been some dreaming, but my first conscious thought was related to you and your affairs North. Then I heard what seemed to be a low, moaning sound, as of one in distress. With all my strength I projected my spirit to your city, and held my hearing faculties in extreme suspension. At length came low, but clear, in broken tones: 'If Malcolm, my boy were here! Oh, can he not be reached—can he not come soon? Those men! If he were only here!' Repetitions of this occurred and similar language addressed to friends or attendants whose replies I could not collect."

"It was my mother, Archbold. She was in one of those attacks of painful heart trouble, from which she has suffered now and then during the past three years. I feel quite sure of it."

"Very likely, and aggravated by some disaster affecting your interests. I have not come to say what you should do, my boy," he added with tenderness.

"Your advice would be most grateful, dear councillor. But I have already determined to leave Oudemon, if I may, at the earliest—to-morrow morning, at sunrise."

"As a dutiful son and faithful friend would do. All our people will regret the sudden going—but we cannot say a word to modify your decision, my

dear boy. No, we shall help to speed you on the way."

"Oh, dear cousin, I am so sorry," exclaimed Stella, bursting into tears, and throwing her arm around me, as we sat in the goalone.

"Ah, *ma petite*, the best of friends must part," I returned with an assumption of vivacity I was far from feeling. At the same time I touched her pure forehead with my lips, then added: "Now you will have time to run over to school, and Archbold and I can ride home together."

"No, I cannot go to the school to-day, dear cousin. You will allow me to help you all I can to get ready, will you not?" the weeping girl said in a voice of entreaty.

"Most gladly, dear child."

CHAPTER XXVII.

RETURNING HOME.

I NEED not recite the incidents of my parting with a people who had become endeared to me as no strangers met elsewhere in the world had ever become. It may only be said that if these Oudemon people had been of my blood and near kindred of my heart the company of two hundred or more that accompanied me in the early dawn to the ridge could not have shown more affection and solicitude. They bid me God-speed with many an embrace and hand pressure, and watched with tearful attention my every movement. Ellice and her brother Percy, Stella, father and mother Bruce, and the ever calm Archbold wept freely; the girls kissed me repeatedly and each at the last minute forced a small package in sealed paper into my coat pocket.

Having ascended to the summit of the great wall in the aerolat I waved my hand and cried: "Good-by, ever dearest friends," to those so far below, and then with spirit greatly dejected gave the necessary attention to the descent on the other side. Julius was by my side, as when months before I had scaled that awe-inspiring barrier—nearly four months so quickly, so happily sped, and so full of strange ex-

periences. The air, perfectly transparent at that early hour revealed objects at a great distance.

"Look there," said Julius, pointing toward the northwest, "can you see a faint column of smoke?" I saw it. "That is the hacienda of Señor Miquel."

But I had little heart for the prospect, wonderfully beautiful as it appeared in the searching rays of an opposite sun. At the foot of the ridge were Champlin and Dexter Lomas.

"My dear fellows, you here? I am very glad to see you, for you were not among the friends on the other side."

"No, we came over to look a little to arrangements for the journey," returned Dexter.

"Are you going down with me?" I asked joyfully.

"We are, dear Malcolm," said the engineer, "Julius and I, to the coast, if you will permit; and Dexter is going to Trinidad, so that we shall have his company for thirty miles or so."

There was my horse, too, looking well; better, in fact, than when we had left him. Evidently he had been cared for while staying on the lofty platform. My pack, somewhat larger than when it had entered Oudemont, was secured to his back, and we began the scramble down hill. Remembering the struggle and trials encountered in getting up I expected a toilsome and perilous going down, but the aerial dress and the reinforcement of two additional companions seemed to divest the broken and difficult

route of most of its dangers, and ere the sun had fairly dispelled the shadows of the ridge we were on the plain and nearing the river. That was crossed at a point fourteen miles lower down than where I had forded it.

When we reached the stream I noted that while it was comparatively narrow there, it was evidently deeper, and fell to speculating as to how we should get over. Julius, however, relieved me of uncertainty by running out a neat skiff, built like those on the lakes and streams of Oudemon, of thin metal ribs and a tough canvas, from a cover of rushes and low salix. In this we embarked. My pony, after being relieved of the pack, was coaxed into the water, and Julius sat at the stern towing him by a strap buckled to his bridle; the other two men swung the paddle, making good pace. Thus we crossed in less than half the time that was occupied by the ranchero and me at the upper point.

Having placed the boat in a safe mooring on the west bank we made our way directly west until a little after noon we stopped in the shade of a clump of dwarf oak, where we ate our luncheon. Dexter here left us, thanking me warmly for my interest in his personal behalf, and hoping it would be his pleasure to see me again. "Only let us know that you will come," he said, "and I shall gladly meet you anywhere between the ridge and the coast."

The passage of the river so much lower down shortened the return march by several miles, so that

we jogged over the uneven plain leisurely, reaching the stockade of the hospitable ranchero that same evening not long after the sun had set. The same welcome and the same courteous entertainment were immediately proffered by Señor Miquel, whose inquiries concerning our success in the gulches were shrewdly answered by the engineer. Referring to the statement that I had made when in his company previously, to the effect that my trip was one chiefly of observation, the señor's curiosity as to my success appeared to be fairly satisfied by my saying that I had seen a really excellent outcrop of gold bearing rock, but at a station that would demand an expensive equipment of tools and machinery for working to advantage.

"If I could organize a company, señor, and send men and machinery there—a pretty hard and costly undertaking, you know—I believe a handsome profit might be made."

Oh, the señor knew "there was plenty gold in the mountain," and hoped that I would succeed in making the company, and come back.

On the following morning we started early on fresh horses, the ranchero making another exchange for my pony and providing me with a quick-footed mustang, while Champlin and Julius bought their mounts with Bolivian silver, the planter agreeing to allow a fair price for the animals if brought back within a month or two. Excellent progress was made now, the better traveling witnessing to the

fact that my companions knew their route, a quite different one from that I had followed when going eastward: a very direct course that occasionally led us through rough pieces of bush or low forest that on approach appeared intimidating, but which proved penetrable without much effort.

A RENCONTRE THAT MIGHT HAVE PROVED SERIOUS.

On the sixth day out from Vadera we encountered a broad stretch of light wood and brush which occupied fully three hours in the passage, part of which time, however, was spent over the noon ration. On emerging from the thicket we saw at no great distance a group of horsemen riding leisurely toward us. There were five of them. Bringing my glass to bear, the one I used when prospecting from the tower on observation day, I noted that they were armed, two carrying rifles strung from their saddles, the others having a good supply of pistols. Mentioning this to Champlin he said: "Rough fellows, no doubt, like most of those who spend their time cruising on the plains."

They were not long in sighting us, which was indicated by a general halt and apparent conference, the distance, probably of two miles and a half, enabling us to watch them carefully. The conference was of brief duration, then each man looked to his accoutrement, the riflemen unslinging their

pieces and all resuming the forward movement in closer order, upon their nimble mustangs.

"What do you really think of them, Julius?" I asked. "Their appearance to me is not assuring of gentleness."

"They are mounted, friend Malcolm, like certain of the reckless fellows one meets down below Trinidad. You may know that there are many parties of desperate vagabonds prowling in the plains and mountains of Bolivia, Buenos Ayres and Peru—a desperate, irresponsible class of men created by the political conditions of most of the South American States. Born and reared as most of the people on this coast are, it is not strange that so many are but half developed morally, and circumstances do the rest toward converting a large proportion of the remainder into rough, careless freebooters."

"Such men are dangerous then," I remarked, still using my glass.

"They are so considered by the quiet planters and herdsmen of the country. But after all there is more good in the unfortunate fellows than may appear on the surface to most of us."

"Well, you are a true Oudemontite, Julius, in that view; but for my part I should consider myself warranted in taking such precautions as were available against the manifest evil of them, for the good might be rather tardy in exhibiting itself."

"It is the part of wisdom," here remarked the engineer, who had not been indifferent to the ap-

proaching party, "to prepare for surprises; but at the same time, my dear boy, let us not anticipate evil in this case."

"No, surely, good master workman," I returned, laughing, "but as for preparation against surprises my old shooting iron is in my valise, where it has been the past three months; since, indeed, a certain day when I was made acquainted with the vast superiority of Oudemont gunnery."

We were now within a mile of the strange horsemen, and each party could easily note the action of the other in that clear level. I observed that the strangers rode weapon in hand. Without further remark, Chanplin, who was in the lead, turned his horse slightly toward the left, and at the same time felt in one of the pockets of his blouse as if to make sure of something being there. Our change of direction, trifling as it was, did not escape attention, for the approaching party also shifted their course so as to make meeting certain, and they quickened their pace also. I hinted this in a low tone, to which Julius nodded, and said:

"Brothers, why not a little experiment now—before we get almost too close to them?"

"As you please, Julius," replied the engineer. The former then drew from his pocket a heavy looking cylinder of metal about seven inches in length which reminded me at once of Willis' gun, on a small scale. I smiled and said:

"I am fond of experiments, but what new freak have you for us, good boy?"

"Do not be in a grievous hurry, Malcolm," said he lightly, "but just study that young laurel yonder." At the same time he aimed the tube carefully at the tree, which was perhaps two hundred and fifty feet off, a little to the right, and so nearly between the approaching horsemen and ourselves.

The low snap of the released gas was followed by a heavy, tearing detonation, with a burst of flame and bluish smoke that enveloped the tree completely, then cleared away rapidly, leaving a sorry enough relict of the thrifty young growth of a few seconds before. Nearly every leaf and fresh shoot had been stripped off, the bright greenness of bough and twig was gone, and scarcely more than a distorted skeleton stood there. Of course, I knew the thorough work of those terrible little shells, and the reader has been given an example or two of their power in the course of this narrative, and so may not be surprised by what happened to the tree; but with the desperadoes of the pampas, the case proved quite different. They were not prepared for Julius' experiment evidently, for immediately after the explosion they halted as if to watch the volume of smoke, and then, as if impressed by the wrecked appearance of the tree, drew closer together and stood as if in consultation over the occurrence. We continued our course, and approached within fifty or sixty yards of the men

while they were yet talking among themselves; then the engineer hailed them in the rude Spanish of the country, and asked if they were *amigos*. To the hail there was a general answer in rough tones: “*Si, Señor; si. si.*”

“Very likely they are now,” said Julius dryly, who still held his shooting tube in the free hand.

“A band of mischief makers, I am convinced,” remarked the engineer in a low tone. “That fellow with the bright yellow stripes in his jacket I have seen before; he is one of the worst of the marauders known on the plains.”

Shouting again, Champlin said: “If friends, have the goodness to put up your weapons, and we will come up to you.”

At this order the robber gang started, three of them partly raised their pieces, the one with the fancy jacket carrying his rifle quite to the shoulder. Then, as if moved by a second thought, he slung the weapon in its place, and the others of the party followed suit, the pistols being rammed into their leathern louts. We drew rein within forty feet of the renegades, and Champlin entered into a little talk with them, making inquiry about certain routes and settlements, and affairs political. One of them, as I inferred from his pointing to the tree, was very curious to know how the shot had been fired that had done so much havoc, and the engineer, with a light laugh, drew out of his pocket a tube similar to that of Julius’, and merely waved it play-

fully toward the robber group. At which they all involuntarily started and made as if to interpose their faithful ponies between them and harm.

"A wonderful gun that of yours, Señor," said he of the yellow stripes, with a malicious grin.

"Yes," said the engineer; "one shot would kill you all easily; even the poor ponies could not escape. Your rifles and revolvers there are only toy pepper boxes."

"It must be a new invention," rejoined the rough fellow, gazing at the weapon eagerly. "May I ask where it can be obtained?"

"Not on the general market, friend, as yet; although our fellows have them. I'm not much of a shot myself, but my comrade here is an adept; think he could destroy a wolf at a thousand yards." Julius laughed, and held up the bit of brown metal with which he had riddled the tree.

The demeanor of the rascally gang became even more respectful at this exhibition. Knowing their lives forfeited by the law of the country, men who held in their hands weapons of such wholesale power of destruction could not but command their respect, if not their fear; and I noted certain furtive glances that intimated that they were not entirely sure we would not suddenly overwhelm them with the short, swift penalty that their crimes deserved.

THE QUALITY OF MERCY.

Little more was said; then we rode on, accompanied with numerous exclamations of "*adios*"

from the discomfited wretches. Looking back five minutes later we saw them assembled near the unfortunate tree, evidently studying its condition and venturing guesses as to the character of the firearm that had done so much execution at a distance.

“It was too pretty a tree to be treated that way, Julius,” I remarked in an affected tone of regret. “The plains are not over furnished with such specimens.”

“I am sorry almost that I shot at it, Malcolm. Yet I was sure that we must anticipate the purpose of those men and save a collision.”

“Not knowing just how it might end for us or them,” added Champlin.

“Well, my dear comrades, let me own that it was a pretty solution of a problem that I first believed to be serious. Really, I thought you were going to parley with the cutthroats, and felt that they would use their guns and parley afterward among themselves over the contents of my pack and your satchels.”

The engineer smiled, and Julius looked whimsically at me. Catching the meaning of their silent expression, I added :

“Perhaps it was I who was too ‘fresh,’ as we say North, and was for the moment outdoing you Oudemonians in my notion of what might be a practical application of Oudemon principle.”

“We had to deal with a different class of men there,” rejoined Julius, bending his head slightly

backward, "and for the safety of all concerned tried the experiment."

"I have not a word of further protest to offer, dear boys—a very judicious maneuver, and so positive in effect. After that shot those freebooters must have been forcibly convinced that we, or rather you, were most dangerous beings and not to be trifled with. Have you ever found yourselves in the situation where it was necessary to apply the *argumentum ad hominem* in that manner more directly?"

"No, I rejoice to say, Malcolm," answered the engineer. "That would be indeed most horrible, such a perversion of the Royal Law."

"Do you mean then, my good Bross, that even in extreme danger, when attacked by these treacherous ruffians of the wild, you would not defend yourself with the means for protection that Providence has committed to your hands?"

"Malcolm, think well of the terrible effect of these explosives; so innocent looking superficially, and yet so thoroughly destructive," said the engineer with deep gravity. "No, I believe, and most of us who have anything to do with outside people believe also, that it is possible in the most trying circumstances to influence those who seem bent upon your injury."

"Yes, most likely, at the right moment you may defeat the wicked purposes of pirates and bandits through surprises that appeal to their wonder sense

and their fear, and being provided, as you are, with such an effective weapon for defence, as well as offence, you can surely appeal to their most active faculties."

"But if we were not so provided, brother," rejoined Julius, "would we not find an application of the Royal Law effective? The worst of men have still a bit of human in them; their soul is not all dead to the touch of kindness and sincerity. You remember the early missionaries and travelers who have gone among the most savage races alone, and lived with them unharmed—Park, Le Caron, Judson, Livingstone, Moffat, Vambery? Prudence and kindness were their chief weapons. Some of your medical folks, I am told, treat their sick with very weak medicines on the principle that 'mild influences subdue the strong.' Is it not best to treat people generally on that line?"

"Well, good Julius, I will not contest the point with you. I guess you have the stronger side from the ethical and metaphysical points of view anyway; yet there's nothing like having your metaphysics backed up by undeniably potent auxiliaries of a material consistency, eh? Just suppose that those fellows ambush you on your return——"

"Pardon, Malcolm, if we remind you again that we are not given to anticipate evil."

"I accept the reproof as opportune, dear Bross. The old habits of civilization—ours up North—must be my apology. Ah, your life back there in

that land of Beulah is so cheerful, generous and reciprocal that one has never occasion to think of anything saving of ‘envy, hatred and malice’ in his relations with neighbors.”

“Really, dear brother,” remarked the engineer affectionately, “you know the great world of men better than we do, and your counsel shall be heeded. Julius and I will be vigilant, you may be assured, for, as you have intimated, the object lesson we have given them may stimulate their avaricious cunning to plan most skilfully to entrap us.”

FROM CALLAO WITH CONFIRMATIONS.

No further incident of a striking nature occurred in our journey, and its very direct course brought us to the railway terminus in ten days less time than my trip eastward had occupied. Facilitated in this material respect the distance from Oudemon to Callao seemed to have been greatly abridged, so that when we rolled into that city the New Year festivities were still on, and the diversity and novelty of their celebration offered so much attraction that the days passed rapidly while waiting for the date of sailing. My two friends roomed at the same hotel and were constantly with me until the hour I walked up the gang plank of the steamer. How loth I was to part with them! Yet, on the instant of departure weakly enough did I repeat my regret and grief at bidding farewell to persons who had become inexpressibly dear to me.

"Ah, Malcolm, you may return and stay with us," tenderly returned Bross, "but would it be best after all? You acted with fine judgment in your association with Ellice Denton, and loyally recognized the claim of your own folk upon you. When again among the old friends settle yourself to the life and conditions to which you have been accustomed, and I trust that you will not find it hard to apply some of our ways, that you approve, to the course of things up there. You should marry, my dear boy."

"Bross, my dear friend, if I could realize but a tithe of the domestic peace and comfort of yonder community, how ready I should be to marry."

"You can, brother; for it must be remembered that the happiness of home depends upon one's self for the most part; upon living seriously, and yet cheerfully in accordance with the Royal Law. Beginning with the wife and family, respect, and compliance with the spirit of that wonderful code extended beyond and made part of our conduct in the general relations of society, we shall not fail of realizing the gracious promises of Him who formulated that Law. You will marry, I doubt not, the worthy young woman you have told us much of, and you and she, I am sure, can help each other to be content and happy. Perhaps we may hear of each other. If you have not acquired sufficient knowledge of the method by impression there is the raven mail, you know, for an occasional mes-

sage from the distant brother. You can interpret our writing and an answer to such tidings as we might send would be expected from you."

"Most gladly, Bross and Julius, shall I receive any message, and most heartily reply. Could I ever forget you all? Impossible. And in the world to come, of whose existence you have taught me to hold a stronger belief, I shall expect to meet you."

The disturbances in the Colombian territory hinted at in Olive's letter must have been adjusted, as I heard little about them and experienced no interruption on my journey across the isthmus.

At Aspinwall I obtained letters that had but then arrived and which apprised me of the illness of mother and of the failure of the company that had been carrying the larger half of my investments, and also of the bankruptcy of an intimate friend, the Langer of Stella's singular communication. Olive wrote in clear yet cheerful terms of what she knew regarding the affairs that affected my financial relations:

"You will have leisure, dear Malcolm, on your trip homeward, should you read the letters lately sent you, to review the matter; and perhaps because so arbitrarily separated from direct contact with the persons who are responsible for the present unhappy condition, you will be the better prepared to meet it, and, knowing you not to be wanting in resources, I may expect—may I not?—that you

will show yourself capable of dealing wisely with those who have been unfaithful or careless; and of saving from further disaster what may remain to your credit on the books of the M. C. Company. But fortunate or unfortunate as the final outcome may be, you know that my trust in you will be ever unshaken, and the little aid, material or otherwise, I can give will be wholly at your service."

Thus the noble young woman offered her sympathy and personal help—quite contrasting with certain lines of peevish remarks charging me with contributing to "the pitiful state of my affairs by unnecessary absence and a wild goose chase," which occurred in a brief letter from my elder sister.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AT HOME.

Two weeks later I stepped upon the dock, and in half an hour was set down with my luggage at my old quarters. An immediate visit to my mother followed. She was sitting up, but still very weak. Rejoiced to see her only boy again, the color lighted up her pale cheeks, and seemed an augury of returning strength and health. A long, long talk with Olive, and then I addressed myself to those business interests deemed so full of embarrassment and peril to what of fortune and credit I had been supposed to possess.

Very soon I learned that the situation was grave enough. To save himself from threatened ruin and disgrace, Cecil Langer, a man who had for years possessed the esteem and confidence of the social and business community, had negotiated valuable funds of mine and others, deposited as a trust in his banking house. He had struggled to prevent their final sale on his account, and finding that a depressed state of the stock market would prevent any realization at all helpful to his complications, had left the city for Canada. When I arrived the brokers were on the point of throwing

these funds upon the public. Hastening to them I obtained two days' delay by pledging the savings of Olive, the warm-hearted girl forcing the deposit upon me. Indeed, she had herself previously called at the bankers and offered the same, assuring them that on my return I would immediately make the best efforts possible to adjust my part in the financial embarrassment. To their credit be it said that they declined the sacrifice, which it would have inevitably proved without further advances.

* * * * *

Then there were the gold and the few souvenir stones collected during my visit in that South American country! Would the reader believe that absorption in my business embarrassments had caused me to forget for the time those possessions? Was it due in part also to a lingering doubt as to their real value? I had not yet entirely unpacked my valise or examined all my luggage since my return. There was an acquaintance, privileged of course by length of association, who remarked rather acrimoniously that I must have spent a good bit on my long cruise, and what could I show for it? Somewhat irritated, I replied with an assumption of confidence not usual: "You will see, Littlebon, that I have something to show for it when necessary." Then I hastened to my lodgings to look over the gifts of Oudemont.

Willis and Stella had assisted in making up the well-strapped pack that had gone through many

hands unfastened until deposited in my home room. On the voyage all articles needed for use daily were carried in a "grip," so there was no occasion to open the larger piece of luggage. Now, on turning out the effects it contained, there was the heavy mineral specimen with its brilliant crystalline surface safely ensconced in its wrappings, and in the pocket of the light coat I had worn *à la manière* Oudemon were the small packages Ellice and Stella had placed there the day of my departure, Stella remarking, "Keep that, cousin, until you are home again." Opening them several bright stones appeared—blue, green, yellow and red crystals of evidently fine form. Two of these I knew I had seen and admired in the collection of Dexter, and a clear green one, of the size of a walnut, was most likely the beryl suggested by Ellice. Then there were the specimens I had picked up myself on the first and second excursions into those mine recesses of my accidental discovery, one of them of large dimensions, said to be a ruby, and a second, the sapphire that guided my steps in the dark passage.

Selecting three of the stones, and taking with them the broken ingot, I called at the famous jewelers and collectors of bric-a-brac, Chiffony & Storr, and having been shown into the private office of the manager, exhibited my treasure. With the block of metal he was greatly impressed, pronouncing it the most remarkable example of crystal gold he had ever seen, and very valuable as a

scientific exhibit, aside from the mere weight. The stones he declared to be not only of rare size and symmetry of form and structure, but also of excellent color; the smallest, an emerald, he estimated would carry a value of at least fifteen hundred dollars, while the other two, a sapphire and ruby, he declared to be so unusual in size and apparent quality that he would not venture to assess their worth. On proposing to accept a loan upon the lot for a year, at six per cent. interest, Mr. Storr offered \$10,500, which I accepted joyfully at once.

With a certified check for this amount in my pocket I repaired to the bankers and confidently entered into a negotiation with them. The outcome of this was that in the course of a few weeks two-thirds of my securities were returned, and it becoming known on the "street" that I had adjusted the claims of the bankers, other and minor involvements were easily arranged, and my innocence established, so far as any participation in the operations of Langer was concerned. The reader might assume that there were not wanting some persons to insinuate more or less cautiously that my peculiar absence was not unrelated to the Langer defalcation. May day came with its return of the swallow and buttercup and found me in possession of fully three-fourths of the personals, my own and mother's, which three months before were thought by most of my friends to have been lost entirely.

Having vindicated my reputation before the business world, a matter of chief concern to a man who would walk serenely in the community of which he is a member, I re-entered upon the duties of my old position in the corporation of Personal Liabilities (Limited), and a little later was offered the place of treasurer to that important house. This I declined, preferring the old relationship which I had filled satisfactorily in all respects. The President, however, insisted that I should at least accept a chair in the Board of Managers. To this I acceded, believing that such a practical recognition of business competence, while it increased my income but twenty per cent., would serve me just as well on 'Change, and socially, as the Treasurership, and add little to my work and responsibility. Besides, I entertained a high estimate of the integrity and capabilities of the present Treasurer. He had been with the company twenty-five years; was yet alert and strong, and devoted to the interests of the house, and as a Director I could help to offset a further attempt to supplant him by a clique of the younger men, who had much to say of old fogym and inappreciation of modern methods of finance.

Settled now in my affairs and pursuing their routine, my thoughts, like "the young man's fancy in springtime," turned to love. Not "lightly," however. I should please my mother by wedding, and

could I better please myself? So one morning in early July Olive and I joined hands in the quiet room of that feeble mother, whose tears of happy content imparted a deeper sacredness to the benediction of the minister that sealed the bond, deciding my social estate for life.

I had not heard from my far Southern home, as I loved to call Oudemon, since leaving it, although two or three times there came to me strong impressions, or low whisperings as it seemed, to which I gave such attention as circumstances permitted. One incident may be worth a brief relation: It occurred a fortnight after our marriage. Olive had come to walk home with me in the early eventide from the office, and on the way we turned into the alley of the fountain circle. The bench now invested with a special interest was unoccupied, and quite unconsciously we took seats upon it. The day had been sultry and few people were out. In this little park recess there were but two or three solitary loungers. Mechanically looking at my watch the thought flashed upon my mind that, allowing for the difference of time, my Oudemon friends were then enjoying their evening recreation, and it must be near the hour of the Angelus. I said:

“Olive, dear, do you know this is the time the good folks down in that summer land are at their evening diversions?”

"Why, my husband, I was just now thinking of the same thing."

Pressing her hand I returned gaily:

"Two souls with but a single thought" it seems, my dearest." Then a slight thrill appeared to vibrate in my brain, and I heard as it were a low whisper: "We are thinking of you, Malcolm, hoping all is well—be happy with Olive—write soon." The effect was so marked that involuntarily I turned my head and peered around to see if any person were near our bench.

"What is it, dear?" inquired Olive.

"I thought that some one was certainly whispering to me, little girl," and went on to tell her the words that had come to me.

"Well, my husband, why may you not have heard them," she said reassuringly, "after all you know of such things, and then, too, their peculiar fitness and power for psychic communication."

Two nights later I had a dream; at least it seemed a dream, for, unlike the vision of Restling after I had deciphered the secret message, I had no consciousness of the waking state in this case. In this dream I saw Stella; she was lying on the couch in her room, with one fair arm bare to the shoulder thrown back upon the pillow. Her eyes were open, but there was the vacant expression, or rather fixed stare in them that I well remembered. Without the least movement she spoke:

"We knew of your troubles, and have given you

our sympathy. We are glad you have taken to your heart the sweet woman by your side. We shall never forget you. Do not forget us. You know we all loved you very much. Write soon, and expect letters from us before long.” Then the expression changed, the stare was lost, a beautiful smile crept over the face and the eyes closed as if to normal sleep.

On relating this “dream” to Olive while dressing next morning, she remarked:

“I can believe, Malcolm dear, that this was a real transmission of thought. That girl has spiritual powers which I should like to possess.”

“The Oudemonites say that persons are gifted, or endowed, specially with faculties for that sort of business, and who knows that my little girl may not be gifted that way, too.”

“I don’t know, surely, about myself, dear boy, but I believe it just as much as I believe that some are gifted with a genius for poetry or music, or art or anything else. Why not? Doesn’t the teaching of Christianity refer to the differences people show in mental and spiritual power, and speak of particular gifts?”

I nodded in answer to this, for could I gainsay anything that the dear girl might assert on the line of Christian doctrine? She was better read in the verba of Scripture than myself, and I felt gratified enough in thinking that my far-off friends continued to hold me in such excellent appreciation.

In obedience to the advice of the dream I wrote a long letter addressed to Archbold in particular, and to friends of that distant country in general, detailing occurrences since my return to the old relations. Especially was note made of the involvements found in my affairs, and the signal help that yellow stuff to which they were so indifferent had been in restoring the *status quo*. Yet I felt bound to admit that this last experience in the financial methods of "civilization" had quite demonstrated the fact that in their circumstances and with their practices they were happier without a coinage of the glittering stuff. My marriage was dwelt upon, of course, and the great improvement that had followed in my domestic situation, and the deep regret entertained—the only cloud in the resplendent blue of my happiness—that Olive and I could not extend our wedding journey to Oudemon. If she could have seen my friends and their wonderful country, and realized thus personally that there was on earth a large community of men and women who had advanced so far in the preferential use of their faculties, in habits and practices essentially altruistic in all things contributing to mutual sympathy and harmony, my satisfaction would have been perfect.

A MESSAGE SUBSTANTIAL.

This letter I addressed to the care of Señor Miquel, in accordance with suggestions given by

Champlin. Two weeks later a packet came into my hands bearing Bolivian and Peruvian postmarks. It contained letters from half a dozen of those dear folks—Archbold, Willis, Stella, Percy, Dexter and the aged Daniel Norris. How delightful for Olive and myself to read these, Olive, of course, following the strange word outlines curiously as I translated them! The frankness and fulness of heart in which their statements were couched most earnestly appealed to our interested sensibilities. They told of the current of life in their different homes and what incidents of public importance had demanded attention. Dexter and Ellice were betrothed, and the happiest expectations were entertained by all regarding the marriage that would be celebrated in the early part of the coming Oudemon summer. Both Archbold and Stella wrote that they anticipated in part the “news” I should write, for they had obtained impressions now and then of my doings, and were glad that so much success had attended my efforts to unravel the tangle in my business affairs, and to make the name of Browne as clean as it was before.

Dexter wrote of the further exploration of the ancient galleries in the mountain, the uncovering of several rich veins of gold and silver, and a very valuable bed of mica, from which slabs of purest transparency had been detached three to five feet in length. He had secured the body of the strange animal quite entire and began preparing it for the

museum. Careful examination had determined it to be a type of dinosaur that had survived the ages and was probably the last seen alive in the world. They had also unearthed, in an excavation communicating with the storage chamber, several skeletons, all of gigantic size, with crania showing an unusual development of the intellectual and moral faculties.

Willis stated that the engineer on his way homeward from Callao fell in with a considerable party of freebooters, among whom were three of the renegades we had encountered, and while they offered no violence, they followed the engineer a long distance in the hope of obtaining information regarding the rich deposits of gold they were sure he knew of in the hills beyond the river. One of Miquel's hands, who caught a few words of our desultory talk with the ranchero, had magnified its vague statements about certain gulches where the precious metal lay in its virgin bed, and fired the avarice of those half-savage rovers to an unappeasable heat. At the chapparal, where we had sighted them, Julius met Champlin, who had made a detour in a southerly direction, and after that the gold-thirsty wretches preserved a respectful demeanor until the stockade of Miquel came in view, when, for some reason, they fell back and were lost sight of.

From the correspondence I also learned that my findings of iron and corundum had been investi-

gated, and shown to be of greater importance than was supposed when the specimens were first examined. Stiles Morgan declared that a higher grade of tool steel was obtainable from the ore, and nothing would please him more than to build and equip a new goalone for me with motor parts from the new metal. Thus it appeared that my visit had not been without certain useful effects upon Oudemon science and industry, and it was quite gratifying to think that my indebtedness to those most worthy people for entertainment and friendly service, however free in the offering, was not altogether lacking in some counterbalance of a substantial nature.

It would have been most delightful to have had the promise of a visit on the part of any of the members of that intimate circle by whom I had been surrounded when in the beloved country; but while the letters contained the warmest expression of remembrance and affection, they were remarkably reticent concerning a renewal of personal intercourse. Even Archbold and Stella—I could pardon Ellice for the omission, because of her expected marital consummation—did not breathe a word respecting the possibility of our meeting again, and I own that this omission piqued my self-consequence, inspiring the thought, gratuitous enough it should be admitted, that a visitor of my quality from the outer civilization had exercised an influence upon the small world of Oudemon that was more or less

disturbing of the quiet order deemed by the sages essential to the best interests of their people.

Well, since that time the changes in my life's routine consequent on marriage and the growing demand of business and social amenity upon my attention have crowded out of mind much of thought that would have been given to Oudemont. At wide intervals a message has come of the old affectionate, cheering nature, and occasionally there has flashed into my brain an idea or suggestion that I would persuade myself was an impression borne on the vibrant ether from friends below the American equator. Olive would always persist in the belief that they were then "remembering us," for now and then a vivid salutation or inquiry seemed to challenge her delicate sensibilities from Stella or Ellice, to which she would strive to make answer, and I do believe with fair success.

The reader may recall the stone that Ellice discovered during our exploration of the mine. I had slipped it into my pocket and brought it home. One day I showed it to Lezoont, expert lapidary of Chiffony & Storr. He pronounced it a sapphire of great value. This I had polished and set in a silver belt buckle, with Dexter's beryl on one side and the ruby given me by Stella on the other. Very few who saw this cincture, worn by my wife on company occasions—her only jeweled ornament aside from a ring set with an emerald and her wedding ring—had any conception of their value.

The emerald must have been picked up by Jabber, as I found it in the basket he had carried that eventful day, with several common pebbles and bits of quartz and mica that he, it is likely, in imitation of his human companions, had gathered. For this emerald Chiffony & Storr offered me \$2,000. As for the sapphire there was nothing like it in their wonderful collection, or in any other known to them. Our ordinary acquaintances admired Mrs. Browne's pretty blue, and red stones, but, of course, they were not so very costly, otherwise they would not be set in "common silver," although the design of that buckle was certainly a highly artistic piece of workmanship, and displayed the crystals to great advantage.

THE END.

DONALD A. WOLLHEIM

